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HISTORY

OF THE

INDUCTIVE SCIENCES.

VOL. III.

HISTORY

OF THE

INDUCTIVE SCIENCES.

FROM THE EARLIEST TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

52268

BY THE

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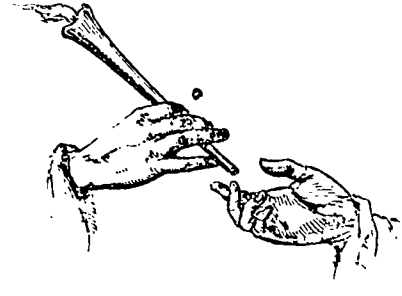
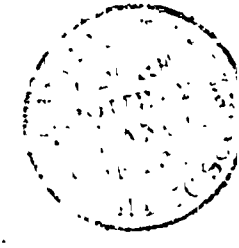
IN THREE VOLUMES.





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CORRECTIONS IN VOL. III.

Page 158, line 24, *for* descriptions, *read* decompositions.
Pages 369, 370, in several places *for* bronchiæ, *read* branchiæ.
Page 464, line 24, add this Note. "The original drawings of Augustino Scilla, and the fossils from which they were taken, were purchased by Woodward, and are still preserved in the Woodwardian Museum at Cambridge."
Page 505, line 17, *read*, "Humboldt, in 1823, expresses doubts which perhaps many other geologists do not feel, when he says," &c.

A

HISTORY

OF

THE INDUCTIVE SCIENCES,

&c.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

. . . . . Go, demand
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
That we should pry far off and be unraised,
That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
Viewing all objects unremittingly
In disconnexion dead and spiritless;
And still dividing, and dividing still,
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
With the perverse attempt, while littleness
May yet become more little; waging thus
An impious warfare 'gainst the very life
Of our own souls.

WORDSWORTH. *Excursion.* B. iv.

BOOK XI.

THE

MECHANICO-CHEMICAL SCIENCES.

HISTORY OF ELECTRICITY.

Parva metu primo; mox sese extollit in auras,
Ingrediturque solo, et caput inter nubila condit.
Æn. iv. 176.

A timid breath at first, a transient touch,
How soon it swells from little into much!
Runs o'er the ground, and springs into the air,
And fills the tempest's gloom, the lightning's glare;
While denser darkness than the central storm
Conceals the secrets of its inward form.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the Mechanico-Chemical Sciences.

UNDER the title of Mechanico-Chemical Sciences, I include the laws of Magnetism, Electricity, Galvanism, and the other classes of phenomena closely related to these, as Thermo-electricity. This group of subjects forms a curious and interesting portion of our physical knowledge; and not the least of the circumstances which give them their interest, is that double bearing upon mechanical and chemical principles, which their name is intended to imply. Indeed, at first sight they appear to be purely Mechanical Sciences; the attractions and repulsions, the pressure and motion, which occur in these cases, are referrible to mechanical conceptions and laws, as completely as the weight or fall of terrestrial bodies, or the motion of the moon and planets. And if the phenomena of magnetism and electricity had directed us only to such laws, the corresponding sciences must have been arranged as branches of mechanics. But we find that, on the other side, these phenomena have laws and bearings of a kind altogether different. Magnetism is associated with Electricity by its mechanical analogies; and, more recently, has been discovered to be still more closely connected with it by physical influence; electric

is identified with galvanic agency; but in galvanism, decomposition, or some action of that kind, universally appears; and these appearances lead to very general laws. Now composition and decomposition are the subjects of Chemistry; and thus we find that we are insensibly but irresistibly led into the domain of that science. The highest generalisations to which we can look, in advancing from the elementary facts of electricity and galvanism, must involve chemical notions; we must therefore, in laying out the platform of these sciences, make provision for that convergence of mechanical and chemical theory, which they are to exhibit as we ascend.

We must begin, however, with stating the mechanical phenomena of these sciences, and the reduction of such phenomena to laws. In this point of view, the phenomena of which we have to speak are those in which bodies exhibit attractions and repulsions, peculiarly determined by their nature and circumstances; as the magnet, and a piece of amber when rubbed. Such results are altogether different from the universal attraction which, according to Newton's discovery, prevails among all particles of matter, and to which cosmical phenomena are owing. But yet the difference of these special attractions and of cosmical attraction, was at first so far from being recognised, that the only way in which men could be led to conceive or assent to an action of one body upon another at a distance, in cosmical cases, was by likening it to magnetic attraction, as we have seen in the history of Physical Astronomy.

And we shall, in the first part of our account, not dwell much upon the peculiar conditions under which bodies are magnetic or electric, since these conditions are not readily reducible to mechanical laws; but, taking the magnetic or electric character for granted, shall trace its effects.

The habit of considering magnetic action as the type or general case of attractive and repulsive agency, explains the early writers having spoken of electricity as a kind of magnetism. Thus Gilbert, in his book *De Magnete* (1600), has a chapter[1], *De coitione Magneticâ, primumque de Succini attractione, sive verius corporum ad Succinum applicatione.* The manner in which he speaks, shows us how mysterious the fact of attraction then appeared; so that, as he says, "the magnet and amber were called in aid by philosophers as illustrations, when our sense is in the dark in abstruse inquiries, and when our reason can go no further." Gilbert speaks of these phenomena like a genuine inductive philosopher, reproving[2] those who before him had "stuffed the booksellers' shops by copying from one another extravagant stories concerning the attraction of magnets and amber, without giving any reason from experiment." He himself makes some important steps in the subject. He distinguishes magnetic from electric forces[3], and is the inventor of the latter name, derived from ἤλεκτρον, amber. He observes rightly, that the electric force attracts all light

[1] Lib. ii. cap. 2.

[2] De Magnete, p. 48.

[3] Ib. p. 52.

bodies, while the magnetic force attracts iron only; and he devises a satisfactory apparatus by which this is shown. He gives[4] a considerable list of bodies which possess the electric property; "Not only amber and agate attract small bodies, as some think, but diamond, sapphire, carbuncle, opal, amethyst, Bristol gem, beryl, crystal, glass, glass of antimony, spar of various kinds, sulphur, mastic, sealing-wax," and other substances which he mentions. Even his speculations on the general laws of these phenomena, though vague and erroneous, as at that period was unavoidable, do him no discredit when compared with the doctrines of his successors a century and a half afterwards. But such speculations belong to a succeeding part of this history.

In treating of these Sciences, I will speak of Electricity in the first place; although it is thus separated by the interposition of Magnetism from the succeeding subjects (Galvanism, &c.) with which its alliance seems, at first sight, the closest, and although some general notions of the laws of magnets were obtained at an earlier period than the corresponding relations of electric phenomena: for the theory of electric attraction and repulsion is somewhat more simple than of magnetic; was, in fact, the first obtained; and was of use in suggesting and confirming the generalisation of magnetic laws.

[4] De Magnete, p. 48.

CHAPTER I.

Discovery of Laws of Electric Phenomena.

We have already seen what was the state of this branch of knowledge at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and the advances made by Gilbert. We must now notice the additions which it subsequently received, and especially those which led to the discovery of general laws, and the establishment of the theory; events of this kind being those of which we have more peculiarly to trace the conditions and causes. Among the facts which we have thus especially to attend to, are the electric attractions of small bodies by amber and other substances when rubbed. Boyle, who repeated and extended the experiments of Gilbert, does not appear to have arrived at any new general notions; but Otto Guericke of Magdeburg, about the same time, made a very material step, by discovering that there was an electric force of repulsion as well as of attraction. He found that when a globe of sulphur had attracted a feather, it afterwards repelled it, till the feather had been in contact with some other body. This, when verified under a due generality of circumstances, forms a capital fact in our present subject. Hawksbee, who wrote in 1709, (*Physico-Mechanical Experiments,*) also observed various of the effects of attraction and repulsion

upon threads hanging loosely. But the person who appears to have first fully seized the general law of these facts, is Dufay, whose experiments appear in the Memoirs of the French Academy, in 1733, 1734, and 1737[1]. "I discovered," he says, "a very simple principle, which accounts for a great part of the irregularities, and, if I may use the term, the caprices that seem to accompany most of the experiments in electricity. This principle is, that electric bodies attract all those that are not so, and repel them as soon as they are become electric by the vicinity or contact of the electric body . . . . Upon applying this principle to various experiments of electricity, any one will be surprised at the number of obscure and puzzling facts which it clears up." By the help of this principle, he endeavours to explain several of Hawkesbee's experiments.

A little anterior to Dufay's experiments were those of Grey, who, in 1729, discovered the properties of *conductors*. He found that the attraction and repulsion which appear in electric bodies are exhibited also by other bodies in contact with the electric. In this manner he found that an ivory ball, connected with a glass tube by a stick, a wire, or a packthread, attracted and repelled a feather, as the glass itself would have done. He was then led to try to extend this communication to considerable distances, first by ascending to an upper window and

[1] Priestley's History of Electricity, p. 45, and the Memoirs quoted.

hanging down his ball, and, afterwards, by carrying the string horizontally supported on loops. As his success was complete in the former case, he was perplexed by failure in the latter; but when he supported the string by loops of silk instead of hempen cords, he found it again become a conductor of electricity. This he ascribed at first to the smaller thickness of the silk, which did not carry off so much of the electric virtue; but from this explanation he was again driven, by finding that wires of brass still thinner than the silk destroyed the effect. Thus Grey perceived that the efficacy of the support depended on its being silk, and he soon found other substances which answered the same purpose. The difference, in fact, depended on the supporting substance being electric, and therefore not itself a conductor; for it soon appeared from such experiments, and especially[2] from those made by Dufay, that substances might be divided into *electrics per se*, and *non-electrics*, or *conductors*. These terms were introduced by Desaguliers[3], and gave a permanent currency to the results of the labours of Grey and others.

Another very important discovery belonging to this period is, that of the two kinds of electricity. This also was made by Dufay. "Chance," says he, "has thrown in my way another principle more universal and remarkable than the preceding one, and which casts a new light upon the subject of

[2] A. P. 1734. [3] Priestley, p. 66.

electricity. The principle is, that there are two distinct kinds of electricity, very different from one another; one of which I call *vitreous*, the other *resinous*, electricity. The first is that of glass, gems, hair, wool, &c.; the second is that of amber, gum lac, silk, &c. The characteristic of these two electricities is, that they repel themselves and attract each other." This discovery does not, however, appear to have drawn so much attention as it deserved. It was published in 1735; (in the Memoirs of the Academy *for* 1733;) and yet in 1747, Franklin and his friends at Philadelphia, who had been supplied with electrical apparatus and information by persons in England well acquainted with the then present state of the subject, imagined that they were making observations unknown to European science, when they were led to assert two conditions of bodies, which were in fact the opposite electricities of Dufay, though the American experimenters referred them to a single element, of which electrized bodies might have either excess or defect. "Hence," Franklin says, "have arisen some new terms among us: we say B," who receives a spark from glass, "and bodies like circumstanced, is electrized *positively*; A," who communicates his electricity to glass, "*negatively*; or rather B is electrized *plus*, A *minus*." Dr. Watson had, about the same time, arrived at the same conclusions, which he expresses by saying that the electricity of A was *more rare*, and that of B *more dense*, than it naturally would have been[4]. But that which gave the main import-

[4] P. p. 115.

ance to this doctrine was its application to some remarkable experiments, of which we must now speak.

Electric action is accompanied, in many cases, by light and a crackling sound. Otto Guericke[5] observes that his sulphur-globe, when rubbed in a dark place, gave faint flashes, such as take place when sugar is crushed. And shortly after, a light was observed at the surface of the mercury in the barometer, when shaken, which was explained at first by Bernoulli, on the then prevalent Cartesian principles; but, afterwards, more truly by Hawkesbee, as an electrical phenomenon. Wall, in 1708, found sparks produced by rubbing amber, and Hawkesbee observed the light and the *snapping*, as he calls it, under various modifications. But the electric spark from a living body, which, as Priestley says[6], "makes a principal part of the diversion of gentlemen and ladies who come to see experiments in electricity," was first observed by Dufay and the Abbé Nollet. Nollet says[7] he "shall never forget the surprise which the first electric spark ever drawn from the human body excited, both in M. Dufay and in himself." The drawing of a spark from the human body was practised in various forms, one of which was familiarly known as the "electrical kiss." Other exhibitions of electrical light were the electrical star, electrical rain, and the like.

[5] Experimenta Magdeburgica, 1672, lib. iv. cap. 15. [6] Ib. p. 47.
[7] Priestley, p. 47. Leçons de Physique, vol. vi. p. 408.

As electricians determined more exactly the conditions of electrical action, they succeeded in rendering more intense those sudden actions which the spark accompanies, and thus produced the electric *shock*. This was especially done in the *Leyden phial*. This apparatus received its name, while the discovery of its property was attributed to Cunæus, a native of Leyden, who, in 1746, handling a vessel containing water in communication with the electrical machine, and happening thus to bring the inside and the outside into connexion, received a sudden shock in his arms and breast. It appears, however[8], that a shock had been received under nearly the same circumstances in 1745, by Von Kleist, a German prelate at Camin, in Pomerania. The strangeness of this occurrence, and the suddenness of the blow, much exaggerated the estimate which men formed of its force. Muschenbroek, after taking one shock, declared he would not take a second for the kingdom of France; though Boze, with a more magnanimous spirit, wished[9] that he might die by such a stroke, and have the circumstances of the experiment recorded in the Memoirs of the Academy. But we may easily imagine what a new fame and interest this discovery gave to the subject of electricity. It was repeated in all parts of the world, with various modifications: and the shock was passed through a line of several persons holding hands; Nollet, in the presence of the king of France, sent it through

[8] Fischer, v. 490. p. 84.

a circle of 180 men of the guards, and along a line of men and wires of 900 toises[10]; and experiments of the same kind were made in England, principally under the direction of Watson, on a scale so large as to excite the admiration of Muschenbroek; who says, in a letter to Watson, "Magnificentissimis tuis experimentis superasti conatus omnium." The result was, that the transmission of electricity through a length of 12,000 feet was, to sense, instantaneous.

The essential circumstances of the electric shock were gradually unravelled. Watson (at that time professor at Cambridge) found that it did not increase in proportion either to the contents of the phial or the size of the globe by which the electricity was excited; that the outside coating of the glass (which, in the first form of the experiment, was only a film of water,) and its contents, might be varied in different ways. To Franklin is due the merit of clearly pointing out most of the circumstances on which the efficacy of the Leyden phial depends. He showed, in 1747[11], that the inside of the bottle is electrized positively, the outside negatively; and that the shock is produced by the restoration of the equilibrium, when the outside and inside are brought into communication suddenly. But in order to complete this discovery, it remained to be shown that the electric matter was collected entirely at the surface of the glass, and that the opposite electricities on the two opposite sides of the glass were accumulated by their

[10] Fischer, v. 512. [11] Letters, p. 13.

mutual attraction. Monnier the younger discovered that the electricity which bodies can receive, depends upon their surface rather than their mass, and Franklin[18] soon found that "the whole force of the bottle, and power of giving a shock, is in the glass itself." This they discovered by decanting the water out of an electrized into another bottle, when it appeared that the second bottle did not become electric, but the first remained so. Thus it was found "that the non-electrics, in contact with the glass, served only to unite the force of the several parts."

So far as the effect of the coating of the Leyden phial is concerned, this was satisfactory and complete: but Franklin was not equally successful in tracing the action of the electric matter upon itself, in virtue of which it is accumulated in the phial; indeed, he appears to have ascribed the effect to some property of the glass. The mode of describing this action varied, accordingly as two electric *fluids* were supposed, (with Dufay,) or one, which was the view taken by Franklin. On this latter supposition the parts of the electric fluid repel each other, and the excess in one surface of the glass expels the fluid from the other surface. This kind of action, however, came into much clearer view in the experiments of Canton, Wilcke, and Æpinus. It was principally manifested in the attractions and repulsions which objects exert when they are in the neighbourhood of electrized bodies; or in the *electrical atmosphere*,

[18] Letters, iv. Sect. 16.

using the phraseology of the time. At present we say that bodies are electrified *by induction*, when they are thus made electric by the electric attraction and repulsion of other bodies. Canton's experiments were communicated to the Royal Society in 1753, and show that the electricity on each body acts upon the electricity of another body, at a distance, with a repulsive energy. Wilke, in like manner, showed that parts of non-electrics, plunged in electric atmospheres, acquire an electricity opposite to that of such atmospheres. And Æpinus devised a method of examining the nature of the electricity at any part of the surface of a body, by means of which he ascertained its distribution, and found that it agreed with such a law of self-repulsion. His attempt to give mathematical precision to this induction was one of the most important steps towards electrical theory, and must be spoken of shortly, in that point of view. But in the mean time we may observe, that this doctrine was applied to the explanation of the Leyden jar; and the explanation was confirmed by charging a plate of air, and obtaining a shock from it, in a manner which the theory pointed out.

Before we proceed to the history of the theory, we must mention some other of the laws of phenomena which were noticed, and which theory was expected to explain. Among the most celebrated of these, were the effect of sharp points in conductors, and the phenomena of electricity in the atmosphere. The former of these circumstances was one of the first which Franklin observed as remarkable.

It was found that the points of needles and the like throw off and draw off the electric virtue; thus a bodkin, directed towards an electrized ball, at six or eight inches' distance, destroyed its electric action. The latter subject, involving the consideration of thunder and lightning, and of many other meteorological phenomena, excited great interest. The comparison of the electric spark to lightning had very early been made; but it was only when the discharge had been rendered more powerful in the Leyden jar, that the comparison of the effects became very plausible. Franklin, about 1750, had offered a few somewhat vague conjectures[13] respecting the existence of electricity in the clouds, but it was not till Wilke and Æpinus had obtained clear notions of the effect of electric matter at a distance, that the real condition of the clouds could be well understood. In 1752, however[14], D'Alibard, and other French philosophers, were desirous of verifying Franklin's conjecture of the analogy of thunder and electricity. This they did by erecting a pointed iron rod, forty feet high, at Marli; the rod was found capable of giving out electrical sparks when a thunder-cloud passed over the place. This was repeated in various parts of Europe, and Franklin suggested that a communication with the clouds might be formed by means of a kite. By these, and similar means, the electricity of the atmosphere was studied by Canton in England, Mazeas in France, Beccaria in Italy, and

[13] Letter v. [14] Franklin, p. 107.

others elsewhere. These essays soon led to a fatal accident, the death of Richman at Petersburg, while he was, on August 6th, 1753, observing the electricity collected from an approaching thunder-cloud, by means of a rod which he called an electrical gnomon: a globe of blue fire was seen to leap from the rod to the head of the unfortunate professor, who was thus struck dead.

It is not here necessary to trace the study of atmospheric electricity any further: and we must now endeavour to see how these phenomena and laws of phenomena which we have related, were worked up into consistent theories; for though many experimental observations and measures were made after this time, they were guided by the theory, and may be considered as having rather discharged the office of confirming than of suggesting it.

We may observe also that we have now described the period of most extensive activity and interest in electrical researches. These naturally occurred while the general notions and laws of the phenomena were becoming, and were not yet become, fixed and clear. At such a period, a large and popular circle of spectators and amateurs feel themselves nearly upon a level, in the value of their trials and speculations, with more profound thinkers: at a later period, when the subject is become a science, that is, a study in which all must be left far behind who do not come to it with disciplined, informed, and logical minds, the cultivators are far more few, and the shout of applause less tumultuous and less loud. We may

add, too, that the experiments, which are the most striking to the senses, lose much of their impressiveness with their novelty. Electricity, to be now studied rightly, must be reasoned upon mathematically; how slowly such a mode of study makes its way, we shall see in the progress of the theory, which we must now proceed to narrate.

CHAPTER II.

The Progress of Electrical Theory.

The cause of electrical phenomena, and the mode of its operation, were naturally at first spoken of in an indistinct and wavering manner. It was called the electric *fire*, the electric *fluid*; its effects were attributed to *virtues*, *effluvia*, *atmospheres*. When men's mechanical ideas became somewhat more distinct, the motions and tendencies to motion were ascribed to *currents*, in the same manner as the cosmical motions had been in the Cartesian system. This doctrine of currents was maintained by Nollet, who ascribed all the phenomena of electrized bodies to the contemporaneous afflux and efflux of electrical matter. It was an important step towards sound theory, to get rid of this notion of moving fluids, and to consider attraction and repulsion as statical forces; and this appears to have been done by others about the same time. Dufay[1] considered that he had proved the existence of two electricities, the vitreous and the resinous, and conceived each of these to be a fluid which repelled its own parts and attracted those of the other: this is, in fact, the outline of the theory which recently has been considered as the best established; but from various causes it was not at once, or at least, not generally adopted. The hypothesis of the excess and defect

[1] Ac. Par. 1733, p. 467.

of a single fluid is capable of being so treated as to give the same results with the hypothesis of two opposite fluids, and happened to obtain the preference for some time. We have already seen that this hypothesis, according to which electric phenomena arose from the excess and defect of a generally diffused fluid, suggested itself to Watson and Franklin about 1747. Watson found that when an electric body was excited, the electricity was not created, but collected; and Franklin held, that when the Leyden jar was charged, the quantity of electricity was unaltered, though its distribution was changed. Symmer[2] maintained the existence of two fluids; and Cigna supplied the main defect which belonged to this tenet in the way in which Dufay held it, by showing that the two opposite electricities were usually produced at the same time. Still the apparent simplicity of the hypothesis of one fluid procured it many supporters. It was that which Franklin adopted, in his explanation of the Leyden experiment; and though, after the first conception of an electrical charge as a disturbance of equilibrium, there was nothing in the developement or details of Franklin's views which deserved to win for them any peculiar authority, his reputation, and his skill as a writer, gave a considerable influence to his opinions. Indeed, for a time he was considered, over a large part of Europe, as the creator of the science, and the terms[3] *Franklinism*, *Franklinist*,

[2] Phil. Trans. 1759.

[3] Priestley, p. 160

Franklinian system, occur in almost every page of continental publications on the subject. Yet the electrical phenomena to the knowledge of which Franklin added least, those of induction, were those by which the progress of the theory was most promoted. These, as we have already said, were at first explained by the hypothesis of electrical atmospheres. Lord Mahon wrote a treatise, in which this hypothesis was mathematically treated; yet the hypothesis was very untenable, for it would not account for the most obvious cases of induction, such as the Leyden jar, except the atmosphere was supposed to penetrate glass.

The phenomena of electricity by induction, when fairly considered by a person of clear notions of the relations of space and force, were seen to accommodate themselves very generally to the conception introduced by Dufay[4], of two electricities each repelling itself and attracting the other. If we suppose that there is only one fluid, which repels itself and attracts all other matter, we obtain, in many cases, the same general results as if we suppose two fluids; thus, if an electrized body, overcharged with the single fluid, act upon a ball, it drives the electric fluid in the ball to the further side by its repulsion, and then attracts the ball by attracting the matter more than it repels the fluid. If we suppose two fluids, the positively electrized body draws the negative fluid to the nearer side of the ball, repels the

[4] A. P. 1733, p. 467.

positive fluid to the opposite side, and attracts the ball on the whole, because the attracted fluid is nearer than that which is repelled. The verification of either of these hypotheses, and the determination of their details, depended necessarily upon experiment and calculation. It was under the hypothesis of a single fluid that this trial was first properly made. Æpinus of Petersburg published, in 1759, his *Tentamen Theoriæ Electricitatis et Magnetismi;* in which he traces mathematically the consequences of the hypothesis of an electric fluid, attracting all other matter, but repelling itself; the law of force of this repulsion and attraction he did not pretend to assign precisely, confining himself to the supposition that the mutual force of the particles increases as the distance decreases. But it was found, that in order to make this theory tenable, an additional supposition was required, namely, that the particles of bodies repel each other as much as they attract the electric fluid[5]. For if two bodies, A and B, be in their natural electrical condition, they neither attract nor repel each other. Now, in this case, the fluid in A attracts the matter in B and repels the fluid in B with equal energy, and thus no tendency to motion results from the fluid in A; and if we further suppose that the *matter* in A attracts the fluid in B and *repels the matter* in B with equal energy, we have the resulting mutual inactivity of the two bodies explained; but without the latter supposition, there would be a

[5] Robison, vol. iv. p. 18.

mutual attraction: or we may put the proof more simply thus; two negatively electrized bodies repel each other; if negative electrization were merely the abstraction of the fluid which is the repulsive element, this result could not follow except there were a repulsion in the bodies themselves, independent of the fluid. And thus Æpinus found himself compelled to assume this mutual repulsion of material particles; he had, in fact, the alternative of this supposition, or that of two fluids, to choose between, for the mathematical results of both hypotheses are the same. Wilke, a Swede, who had at first asserted and worked out the Æpinian theory in its original form, afterwards inclined to the opinion of Symmer; and Coulomb, when, at a later period, he confirmed the theory by his experiments and determined the law of force, did not hesitate to prefer[6] the theory of two fluids, "because," he says, "it appears to me contradictory to admit at the same time, in the particles of bodies, an attractive force in the inverse ratio of the squares of the distances, which is demonstrated by universal gravitation, and a repulsive force in the same inverse ratio of the squares of the distances; a force which would necessarily be infinitely great relatively to the action of gravitation." We may add, that by forcing us upon this doctrine of the universal repulsion of matter, the theory of a single fluid seems quite to lose that superiority in the way of simplicity which had originally been its principal recommendation.

[6] Mém. Ac. P. 1788, p. 671.

The mathematical results of the supposition of Æpinus, which are, as Coulomb observes[7], the same as of that of the two fluids, were traced by the author himself, in the work referred to, and shown to agree, in a great number of cases, with the observed facts of electrical induction, attraction, and repulsion. Apparently this work did not make its way very rapidly through Europe; for in 1771, Henry Cavendish stated[8] the same hypothesis in a paper read before the Royal Society; which he prefaces by saying, "Since I first wrote the following paper, I find that this way of accounting for the phenomena of electricity is not new. Æpinus, in his *Tentamen Theoriæ Electricitatis et Magnetismi*, has made use of the same or nearly the same hypothesis that I have; and the conclusions he draws from it agree nearly with mine as far as he goes."

The confirmation of the theory was, of course, to be found in the agreement of its results with experiment; and in particular, in the facts of electrical induction, attraction, and repulsion, which suggested the theory. Æpinus showed that such a confirmation appeared in a number of the most obvious cases; and to these, Cavendish added others, which, though not obvious, were of such a nature that the calculations, in general difficult or impossible, could in these instances be easily performed; as, for example, cases in which there are plates or globes at the

[7] Ac. P. 1788, p. 672.

[8] Phil. Trans. 1771, vol. lxi.

two extremities of a long wire. In all these cases of electrical action, the theory was justified. But in order to give it full confirmation, it was to be considered whether any other facts, not immediately assumed in the foundation of the theory, were explained by it; a circumstance which, as we have seen, gave the final stamp of truth to the theories of astronomy and optics. Now we appear to have such confirmation, in the effect of points, and in the phenomena of the electrical discharge. The theory of neither of these was fully understood by Cavendish, but he made an approach to the true view of them. If one part of a conducting body be a sphere of small radius, the electric fluid upon the surface of this sphere will, it appears by calculation, be more dense, and tend to escape more energetically, in proportion as the radius of the sphere is smaller; and, therefore, if we consider a point as part of the surface of a sphere of imperceptible radius, it follows from the theory that the effort of the fluid to escape at that place will be enormous; so that it may easily be supposed to overcome the resisting causes. And the discharge may be explained in nearly the same manner; for when a conductor is brought nearer and nearer to an electrized body, the opposite electricity is more and more accumulated by attraction on the side next to the electrized body; its tension becomes greater by the increase of its quantity and the diminution of the distance, and at last it is too strong to be contained, and leaps out in the form of a spark.

The light, sound, and mechanical effects produced by the electric discharge, made the electric *fluid* to be not merely considered as a mathematical hypothesis, useful for reducing phenomena to formulæ, (as for a long time the magnetic fluid was,) but caused it to be at once and universally accepted as a physical reality, of which we learn the existence by the common use of the senses, and of which measures and calculations are only wanted to teach us the laws.

The applications of the theory of electricity which I have principally considered above, are those which belong to conductors, in which the electric fluid is perfectly moveable, and can take that distribution which the forces require. In non-conducting or electric bodies, the conditions to which the fluid is subject are less easy to determine; but by supposing that the fluid moves with great difficulty among the particles of such bodies,—that nevertheless it may be dislodged and accumulated in parts of the surface of such bodies, by friction and other modes of excitement, and that the earth is an inexhaustible reservoir of electric matter,—the principal facts of excitation and the like receive a tolerably satisfactory explanation.

The theory of Æpinus, however, still required to have the law of action of the particles of the fluid determined. If we were to call to mind how momentous an event in physical astronomy was the determination of the law of the cosmical forces, the inverse square of the distance, and were to suppose

the importance and difficulty of the analogous step in this case to be of the same kind, this would be to mistake the condition of science at that time. The leading idea, the conception of the possibility of explaining natural phenomena by means of the action of forces, on rigorously mechanical principles, had already been promulgated by Newton, and was, from the first, seen to be peculiarly applicable to electrical phenomena; so that the very material step of clearly proposing the problem, often more important than the solution of it, had already been made. Moreover the confirmation of the truth of the assumed cause in the astronomical case depended on taking the right law; but the electrical theory could be confirmed, in a general manner at least, without this restriction. Still it was an important discovery that the law of the inverse square prevailed in these as well as in cosmical attractions.

It was impossible not to conjecture beforehand that it would be so. Cavendish had professed in his calculations not to take the exponent of the inverse power, on which the force depended, to be strictly 2, but to leave it indeterminate between 1 and 3; but in his applications of his results, he obviously inclines to the assumption that it is 2. Experimenters tried to establish this in various ways. Robison[9], in 1769, had already proved that the law of force is very nearly or exactly the inverse square; and Mayer[10] had discovered, but not published, the same result. The

[9] Works, iv. p. 68. [10] Biog. Univ. art. Coulomb, by Biot.

clear and satisfactory establishment of this truth is due to Coulomb, and was one of the first steps in his important series of researches on this subject. In his first paper[11] in the Memoirs of the Academy for 1785, he proves this law for small globes; in his second Memoir he shows it to be true for globes one and two feet in diameter. His invention of the *torsion-balance*, which measures very small forces with great certainty and exactness, enabled him to set this question at rest for ever.

The law of force being determined for the particles of the electric fluids, it now came to be the business of the experimenter and the mathematician to compare the results of the theory in detail with those of experimental measures. Coulomb undertook both portions of the task. He examined the electricity of portions of bodies by means of a little disk (his *tangent plane*) which he applied to them and then removed, and which thus acted as a sort of electric *taster*. His numerical results, (the intensity being still measured by the torsion-balance,) are the fundamental facts of the theory of the electrical fluid. Without entering into detail, we may observe that he found the electricity to be entirely collected at the surface of conductors, (which Beccaria had before shown to be the case,) and that he examined and recorded the electric intensity at the surface of globes, cylinders, and other conducting bodies, placed within each other's influence in various ways.

[11] A. P. 1785, pp. 569, 578.

The mathematical calculation of the distribution of two fluids, all the particles of which attract and repel each other according to the above law, was a problem of no ordinary difficulty; as may easily be imagined, when it is recollected that the attraction and repulsion determine the distribution, and the distribution reciprocally determines the attraction and repulsion. The problem was of the same nature as those of the figure of the earth, and of the tides; and its rigorous solution was beyond the powers of the analysis of Coulomb's time. He obtained, however, approximate solutions with much ingenuity; for instance, in a case in which it was obvious that the electric fluid would be most accumulated at and near the equator of a certain sphere, he calculated the action of the sphere on two suppositions: first, that the fluid was all collected precisely at the equator; and next, that it was uniformly diffused over the surface; and he then assumed the actual case to be intermediate between these two. By such artifices, he was able to show that the results of his experiments and of his calculations gave an agreement sufficiently near to entitle him to consider the theory as established on a solid basis.

Thus, at this period, mathematics was behind experiment; and a problem was proposed, in which theoretical numerical results were wanted for comparison with observation, but could not be accurately obtained; as was the case in astronomy also, till the time of the approximate solution of the Problem of Three Bodies, and the consequent formation of

the Tables of the Moon and Planets on the theory of universal gravitation. After some time, electrical theory was relieved from this reproach, mainly in consequence of the progress which astronomy had occasioned in pure mathematics. About 1801, there appeared in the Bulletin des Sciences[12], an exact solution of the problem of the distribution of electric fluid on a spheroid, obtained by Biot, by the application of the peculiar methods which Laplace had invented for the problem of the figure of the planets. And in 1811, M. Poisson applied Laplace's artifices to the case of two spheres acting upon one another in contact, a case to which many of Coulomb's experiments were referrible; and the agreement of the results of theory and observation, thus extricated from Coulomb's numbers, obtained above forty years previously, was very striking and convincing[13]. It followed also from Poisson's calculations, that when two electrized spheres are brought near each other, the accumulation of the opposite electricities on their nearest points increases without limit as the spheres approach to contact; so that before the contact takes place, the external resistance will be overcome, and a *spark* will pass.

Though the relations of non-conductors to electricity, and various other circumstances, leave many facts imperfectly explained by the theory, yet we may venture to say that, as a theory which gives the laws of the phenomena, and which determines the

[12] No. li. [13] A. P. 1811.

distribution of those elementary forces, on the surface of electrized bodies, from which elementary forces (whether arising from the presence of a fluid or not,) the total effects result, the doctrine of Dufay and Coulomb, as developed in the analysis of Poisson, is securely and permanently established. This part of the subject has been called *statical electricity*. In the establishment of the theory of this branch of science, we must, I conceive, allow to Dufay more merit than is generally ascribed to him; since he saw clearly, and enunciated in a manner which showed that he duly appreciated their capital character, the two chief principles,—the conditions of electrical attraction and repulsion, and the apparent existence of two kinds of electricity. His views of attraction are, indeed, partly expressed in terms of the Cartesian hypothesis of vortices, then prevalent in France; but, at the time when he wrote, these forms of speech indicated scarcely anything besides the fact of attraction. Franklin's real merit as a discoverer was, that he was one of the first who distinctly conceived the electrical charge as a derangement of equilibrium. The great fame which, in his day, he enjoyed, arose from the clearness and spirit with which he narrated his discoveries; from his dealing with electricity in the imposing form of thunder and lightning; and partly, perhaps, from his character as an American and a politician; for he was already, in 1736, engaged in public affairs as clerk to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, though it

was not till a later period of his life that his admirers had the occasion of saying of him—

Eripuit cœlis fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis;
Born to control all lawless force, all fierce and baleful sway,
The thunder's bolt, the tyrant's rod, alike he wrenched away.

Æpinus and Coulomb were two of the most eminent physical philosophers of the last century, and laboured in the way peculiarly required by that generation; whose office it was to examine the results, in particular subjects, of the general conception of attraction and repulsion, as introduced by Newton. The reasonings of the Newtonian period had, in some measure, anticipated all possible theories resembling the electrical doctrine of Æpinus and Coulomb; and, on that account, this doctrine could not be introduced and confirmed in a sudden and striking manner, so as to make a great epoch. Accordingly, Dufay, Symmer, Watson, Franklin, Æpinus and Coulomb, have all a share in the process of induction. With reference to these founders of the theory of electricity, Poisson holds the same place which Laplace holds with reference to Newton.

The reception of the Coulombian theory (so we must call it, for the Æpinian theory implies one fluid only,) has hitherto not been so general as might have been reasonably expected from its very beautiful accordance with the facts which it contemplates. This has partly been owing to the extreme abstruseness of the mathematical reasoning which it employs, and which put it out of the reach of most experi-

menters and writers of works of general circulation. The theory of Æpinus was explained by Robison in the Encyclopædia Britannica; the analysis of Poisson has recently been presented to the public in the Encyclopædia Metropolitana, but is of a kind not easily mastered even by most mathematicians. On these accounts probably it is, that in English compilations of science, we find, even to this day, the two theories of one and of two fluids stated as if they were nearly on a par in respect of their experimental evidence. Still we may say that the Coulombian theory is probably assented to by all who have examined it, at least as giving the laws of phenomena; and I have not heard of any denial of it from such a quarter, or of any attempt to show it to be erroneous by detailed and measured experiments. Mr. Snow Harris has recently[13] described some important experiments and measures; but his apparatus was of such a kind that the comparison of the results with the Coulombian theory was not easy; and indeed the mathematical problems which Mr. Harris's combinations offered, require another Poisson for their solution. Still the more obvious results are such as agree with the theory, even in the cases in which their author considered them to be inexplicable. For example, he found that by doubling the quantity of electricity of a conductor, it attracted a body with four times the force; but the body not being insulated, would have

[13] Phil. Tr. 1834, P. 2.

its electricity also doubled by induction, and thus the fact was what the theory required.

Though it is thus highly probable that the Coulombian theory of electricity (or the Æpinian, which is mathematically equivalent,) will stand as a true representation of the law of the elementary actions, we must yet allow that it has not received that complete evidence, by means of experiments and calculations added to those of its founders, which the precedents of other permanent sciences have led us to look for. The experiments of Coulomb, which he used in the establishment of the theory, were not very numerous, and they were limited to a peculiar form of bodies, namely spheres. In order to form the proper *sequel* to the promulgation of this theory, to give it a full *confirmation*, and to ensure its general *reception*, we ought to have experiments more numerous and more varied (such as those of Mr. Harris are) shown to agree in all respects with results calculated from the theory. This would, as we have said, be a task of labour and difficulty; but the person who shall execute it will deserve to be considered as one of the real founders of the true doctrine of electricity. To show that the coincidence between theory and observation, which has already been proved for spherical conductors, obtains also for bodies of other forms, will be a step in electricity analogous to what was done in astronomy, when it was shown that the law of gravitation applied to comets as well as to planets.

But although we consider the views of Æpinus or Coulomb in a very high degree probable as a *formal theory*, the question is very different when we come to examine them as a *physical theory*;—that is, when we inquire whether there really is a material electric fluid or fluids.

Question of One or Two Fluids.—In the first place as to question whether the fluids are one or two;—Coulomb's introduction of the hypothesis of two fluids has been spoken of as a reform of the theory of Æpinus; it would probably have been more safe to have called his labours an advance in the calculation, and in the comparison of hypothesis with experiment, than to have used language which implied that the question, between the rival hypotheses of one or two fluids, could be treated as settled. For, in reality, if we assume, as Æpinus does, the mutual repulsion of all the particles of matter, in addition to the repulsion of the particles of the electric fluid for one another and their attraction for the particles of matter, the one fluid of Æpinus will give exactly the same results as the two fluids of Coulomb. The mathematical formulæ of Coulomb and of Poisson express the conditions of the one case as well as of the other; the interpretation only being somewhat different. The place of the forces of the resinous fluid is supplied by the excess of the forces ascribed to the matter above the forces of the fluid, in the parts where the electric fluid is deficient.

The obvious argument against this hypothesis is, that we ascribe to the particles of matter a mutual

repulsion, in addition to the mutual attraction of universal gravitation, and that this appears incongruous. Accordingly, Æpinus says, that when he was first driven to this proposition it horrified him[14]. But we may answer it in this way very satisfactorily: —If we suppose the mutual repulsion of matter to be somewhat less than the mutual attraction of matter and electric fluid, it will follow, as a consequence of the hypothesis, that besides all obvious electrical action, the particles of matter would attract each other with forces varying inversely as the square of the distance. Thus gravitation itself becomes an electrical phenomenon, arising from the residual excess of attraction over repulsion; and the fact which is urged against the hypothesis becomes a confirmation of it. By this consideration the prerogative of simplicity passes over to the side of the hypothesis of one fluid; and the rival view appears to lose at least all its superiority.

Very recently, M. Mosotti[15] has calculated the results of the Æpinian theory in a far more complete manner than had previously been performed; using Laplace's co-efficients, as Poisson had done for the Coulombian theory. He finds that, from the supposition of a fluid and of particles of matter exercising such forces as that theory assumes, (with the very allowable additional supposition that the particles

[14] Neque diffiteor cum ipsa se mihi offerret . . . . . me ad ipsam quodammodo exhorruisse. Tentamen Theor. Elect. p. 39.

[15] Sur les Forces qui régissent la Constitution Intérieure des Corps. Turin. 1836.

are small compared with their distances,) it follows that the particles would exert a force, repulsive at the smallest distances, a little further on vanishing, afterwards attractive, and at all sensible distances attracting in proportion to the inverse square of the distance. Thus there would be a position of stable equilibrium for the particles at a very small distance from each other, which may be, M. Mosotti suggests, that equilibrium on which their physical structure depends. According to this view, the resistance of bodies to compression and to extension, as well as the phenomena of statical electricity and the mutual gravitation of matter, are accounted for by the same hypothesis of a single fluid or ether. A theory which offers a prospect of such a generalisation is worth attention; but a very clear and comprehensive view of the doctrines of several sciences is requisite to prepare us to estimate its value and probable success.

Question of the Material Reality of the Electric Fluid.—At first sight, the beautiful accordance of the experiments with calculations founded upon the attractions and repulsions of the two hypothetical fluids, persuade us that the hypothesis must be the real state of things. But we have already learned that we must not trust such evidence too readily. It is a curious instance of the mutual influence of the histories of two provinces of science, but I think it will be allowed to be just, to say that the discovery of the polarization of heat has done much to shake

the theory of the electric fluids as a physical reality. For the doctrine of a material caloric appeared to be proved (from the laws of conduction and radiation) by the same kind of mathematical evidence (the agreement of the laws respecting the elementary actions with those of fluids,) which we have for the doctrine of material electricity. Yet we now seem to see that heat cannot be matter, since its rays have sides, in a manner in which a stream of particles of matter cannot have them, without inadmissible hypotheses. We see, then, that it will not be contrary to precedent, if our electrical theory representing with perfect accuracy the *laws* of the actions, in all their forms, simple and complex, should yet be fallacious as a view of the *cause* of the actions.

Any true view of electricity must include, or at least be consistent with, the other classes of the phenomena, as well as this statical electrical action; such as the conditions of excitation and retention of electricity; to which we may add, the connexion of electricity with magnetism and with chemistry;—a vast field, as yet dimly seen. Now, even with regard to the simplest of these questions, the cause of the retention of electricity at the surface of bodies, it appears to be impossible to maintain Coulomb's opinion, that this is effected by the resistance of air to the passage of electricity. The other questions are such as Coulomb did not attempt to touch; they refer, indeed, principally to laws not suspected at his time. How wide and profound a theory must be

which deals worthily with these, we shall obtain some indications in the succeeding part of our history.

But it may be said on the other side, that we have the evidence of our senses for the reality of an electric fluid;—we see it in the spark; we hear it in the explosion; we feel it in the shock; and it produces the effects of mechanical violence, piercing and tearing the bodies through which it passes. And those who are disposed to assert a real fluid on such grounds, may appear to be justified in doing so, by one of Newton's "Rules of Philosophizing," in which he directs the philosopher to assume, in his theories, "causes which are true." The usual interpretation of a "vera causa," has been, that it implies causes which, independently of theoretical calculations, are known to exist by their mechanical effects; as gravity was familiarly known to exist on the earth, before it was extended to the heavens. The electric fluid might seem to be such a *vera causa.*

To this I should venture to reply, that this reasoning shows how delusive the Newtonian rule, so interpreted, may be. For a moment's consideration will satisfy us that none of the circumstances, above adduced, can really prove material currents, rather than vibrations, or other modes of agency. The spark and shock are quite insufficient to supply such a proof. Sound is vibrations,—light is vibrations; vibrations may affect our nerves, and may rend a body, as when glasses are broken by sounds.

Therefore all these supposed indications of the reality of the electric fluid are utterly fallacious. In truth, this mode of applying Newton's rule consists in elevating our first rude and unscientific impressions into a supremacy over the results of calculation, generalisation, and systematic induction[16].

Thus our conclusion with regard to this subject is, that if we wish to form a stable physical theory of electricity, we must take into account, not only the laws of statical electricity, which we have been chiefly considering, but the laws of other kinds of agency, different from the electric, but connected with it. For the electricity of which we have hitherto spoken, and which is commonly excited by friction, is identical with galvanic action, which is a result of chemical combinations, and belongs to chemical philosophy. The connexion of these different kinds of electricity with one another leads us into a new domain; but we must, in the first place, consider their mechanical laws. We now proceed to another branch of the same subject, Magnetism.

[16] I have given an account of the history and evidence of the Theory of Electricity in the Reports of the British Association for 1835. I may seem there to have spoken more favourably of the Theory as a Physical Theory than I have done here. This difference is principally due to a consideration of the present aspect of the theory of heat.

BOOK XII.

MECHANICO-CHEMICAL SCIENCES.

(CONTINUED.)

HISTORY OF MAGNETISM.

Effice, ut interea fera munera militiaï
Per maria ac terras omneis sopita quiescant.
Nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace juvare
Mortales; quoniam belli fera munera Mavors
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
Rejicit, æterno devictus vulnere amoris;
Atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta,
Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, Dea, visus,
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.
Hunc tu, Diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
Circumfusa super, suaves ex ore loquelas
Funde, petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pace.

LUCRET. i. 31.

O charming Goddess, whose mysterious sway
The unseen hosts of earth and sky obey;
To whom, though cold and hard to all besides,
The Iron God by strong affection glides,
Flings himself eager to thy close embrace,
And bends his head to gaze upon thy face;
Do thou, what time thy fondling arms are thrown
Around his form, and he is all thy own,
Do thou, thy Rome to save, thy power to prove,
Beg him to grant a boon for thy dear love;
Beg him no more in battle fields to deal,
Or crush the nations with his mailed heel,
But, touched and softened by a worthy flame,
Quit sword and spear, and seek a better fame.
Bid him to make all war and slaughter cease,
And ply his genuine task in arts of peace;
And by thee guided o'er the trackless surge,
Bear wealth and joy to ocean's farthest verge.

CHAPTER I.

Discovery of Laws of Magnetic Phenomena.

The history of magnetism is in a great degree similar to that of electricity, and many of the same persons were employed in the two trains of research. The general fact, that the magnet attracts iron, was nearly all that was known to the ancients, and is frequently mentioned and referred to; for instance, by Pliny, who wonders and declaims concerning it, in his usual exaggerated style[1]. The writers of the stationary period, in this subject as in others, employed themselves in collecting and adorning a number of extravagant tales, which the slightest reference to experiment would have disproved; as for example, that a magnet, when it has lost its virtue, has it restored by goat's blood. Gilbert, whose work *De Magnete* we have already mentioned, speaks with becoming indignation and pity of this bookish folly, and repeatedly asserts the paramount value of experiments. He himself, no doubt, acted up to his own precepts; for his work contains all the fundamental facts of the science, so fully examined indeed, that even at this day we have little to add to them. Thus, in his first Book, the subjects of the third, fourth, and fifth Chapters are,—that the magnet has poles,—that we may call these poles the north and

[1] Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi. c. 25.

the south pole,—that in two magnets the north pole of each attracts the south pole and repels the north pole of the other. This is, indeed, the cardinal fact on which our generalisations rest; and the reader will perceive at once its resemblance to the leading phenomena of statical electricity.

But the doctrines of magnetism, like those of heat, have an additional claim on our notice from the manner in which they are exemplified in the globe of the earth. The subject of *terrestrial magnetism* forms a very important addition to the general facts of magnetic attraction and repulsion. The property of the magnet by which it directs its poles exactly or nearly north and south, when once discovered, was of immense importance to the mariner. It does not appear easy to trace with certainty the period of this discovery. Passing over certain legends of the Chinese, as at any rate not bearing upon the progress of European science[2], the earliest notice of this property appears to be contained in the Poem of Guyot de Provence, who describes the needle as being magnetized, and then placed in or on a straw, (floating on water, as I presume:)

> Puis se torne la pointe toute
> Contre l'estoile sans doute;

that is, it turns towards the pole-star. This account would make the knowledge of this property in Europe anterior to 1200. It was afterwards found[3]

[2] Enc. Met. Magn. p. 736.

[3] Before 1269. Enc. Met. p. 737

that the needle does not point exactly towards the north: Gilbert was aware of this deviation, which he calls the *variation*, and also, that it is different in different places[4]. He maintained on theoretical principles also[5], that at the same place the variation is constant; probably in his time there were not any recorded observations by which the truth of this assertion could be tested; it was afterwards found to be false. The alteration of the variation in proceeding from one place to another was, it will be recollected, one of the circumstances which most alarmed the companions of Columbus in 1492. Gilbert says[6], "Other learned men have, in long navigations, observed the differences of magnetic variation, as Thomas Hariot, Robert Hues, Edward Wright, Abraham Kendall, all Englishmen: others have invented magnetic instruments and convenient modes of observation, such as are requisite for those who take long voyages, as William Borough in his book concerning the variation of the compass, William Barlo in his supplement, William Norman in his 'New Attractive.' This is that Robert Norman (a good seaman and an ingenious artificer,) who first discovered the *dip* of magnetic iron." This important discovery was made[7] in 1576. From the time when the difference of the variation of the compass in different places became known, it was important to mariners to register the variation in all parts of the world. Halley was appointed to the command of a ship in the Royal Navy by the government of

[4] De Magnete, lib. iv. c. 1.
[5] c. 3.
[6] Lib. i. c. 1.
[7] Enc. Met. p. 738.

William and Mary, with orders "to seek by observation the discovery of the rule for the variation of the compass." He published Magnetic Charts, which have been since corrected and improved by various persons. The most recent are those of Mr. Yates in 1817, and of Hansteen. The dip, as well as the variation, was found to be different in different places. M. Humboldt, in the course of his travels, collected many such observations. And both the observations of variation and of dip seemed to indicate that the earth, as to its effect on the magnetic needle, may, approximately at least, be considered as a magnet, the poles of which are not far removed from the earth's poles of rotation. Thus we have a *magnetic equator*, in which the needle has no dip, and which does not deviate far from the earth's equator; although, from the best observations, it appears to be by no means a regular circle. And the phenomena, both of the dip and of the variation, in high northern latitudes, appear to indicate the existence of a pole below the surface of the earth to the north of Hudson's Bay. In his second remarkable expedition into those regions Captain Ross is supposed to have reached the place of this pole; the dipping-needle there pointing vertically downwards, and the variation-compass turning towards this point in the adjacent regions. We shall hereafter have to consider the more complete and connected views which have been taken of terrestrial magnetism.

In 1633, Gellibrand discovered that the variation is not constant, as Gilbert imagined, but that at London it had diminished from eleven degrees east

in 1580, to four degrees in 1633. Since that time the variation has become more and more westerly; it is now about twenty-five degrees west, and the needle is supposed to have begun to travel eastward again.

The next important fact which appeared with respect to terrestrial magnetism was, that the position of the needle is subject to a small *diurnal* variation: this was discovered in 1722 by Graham, a philosophical instrument-maker of London. The daily variation was established by one thousand observations of Graham, and confirmed by four thousand more made by Canton, and is now considered to be out of dispute. It appeared also, by Canton's researches, that the diurnal variation undergoes an annual inequality, being nearly a quarter of a degree in June and July, and only half that quantity in December and January.

Having thus noticed the principal facts which belong to terrestrial magnetism, we must return to the consideration of those phenomena which gradually led to a consistent magnetic theory. Gilbert observed that both smelted iron and hammered iron have the magnetic virtue, though in a weaker degree than the magnet itself[s], and he asserted distinctly that the magnet is merely an ore of iron, (lib. i. c. 16, Quod magnes et vena ferri idem sunt.) He also noted the increased energy which magnets acquire by being *armed;* that is, fitted with a cap of

[s] Lib. i. c. 9—13.

polished iron at each pole[9]. But we do not find till a later period any notice of the distinction which exists between the magnetical properties of soft iron and of hard steel;—the latter being susceptible of being formed into *artificial magnets*, with permanent poles; while soft iron is only *passively magnetic*, receiving a temporary polarity from the action of a magnet near it, but losing this property when the magnet is removed. About the middle of the last century, various methods were devised of making artificial magnets, which exceeded in power all magnetic bodies previously known.

The remaining experimental researches had so close an historical connexion with the theory, that they will be best considered along with it, and to that, therefore, we now proceed.

[9] Lib. ii. c. 17.

CHAPTER II.

Progress of Magnetic Theory.

Theory of Magnetic Action.—The assumption of a fluid, as a mode of explaining the phenomena, was far less obvious in magnetic than in electric cases, yet it was soon arrived at. After the usual philosophy of the middle ages, the "forms" of Aquinas, the "efflux" of Cusanus, the "vapours" of Costæus, and the like, which are recorded by Gilbert[1], we have his own theory, which he also expresses by ascribing the effects to a "formal efficiency;"—a "*form* of primary globes; the proper entity and existence of their homogeneous parts, which we may call a primary and radical and astral *form*:"—of which forms there is one in the sun, one in the moon, one in the earth, the latter being the magnetic virtue.

Without attempting to analyse the precise import of these expressions, we may proceed to Descartes's explanation of magnetic phenomena. The mode in which he presents this subject[2] is, perhaps, the most persuasive of his physical attempts. If a magnet be placed among iron filings, these arrange themselves in curve lines, which proceed from one pole of the magnet to the other. It was not difficult to conceive these to be the traces of currents of ethereal

[1] Gilb lib. ii. c. 3, 4.

[2] Prin. Phil. pars iv. c. 146.

matter which circulate through the magnet, and which are thus rendered sensible even to the eye. When phenomena could not be explained by means of one vortex, several were introduced. Three Memoirs on magnetism, written on such principles, had the prize adjudged[3] by the French Academy of Sciences in 1746.

But the Cartesian philosophy gradually declined; and it was not difficult to show that the *magnetic curves*, as well as other phenomena, would, in fact, result from the attraction and repulsion of two poles. The analogy of magnetism with electricity was so strong and clear, that similar theories were naturally proposed for the two sets of facts; the distinction of bodies into conductors and electrics in the one case, corresponding to the distinction of soft iron and hard steel, in their relations to magnetism. Æpinus published a theory of magnetism and electricity at the same time (1759); and the former theory, like the latter, explained the phenomena of the opposite poles as results of the excess and defect of a "magnetic fluid," which was dislodged and accumulated in the ends of the body, by the repulsion of its own particles, and by the attraction of iron or steel, as in the case of induced electricity. The Æpinian theory of magnetism, as of electricity, was recast by Coulomb, and presented in a new shape, with two fluids instead of one. But before this theory was reduced to calculation, it was obviously desirable, in the first place, to determine the law of force.

[3] Coulomb, 1789, p. 482.

In magnetic, as in electric action, the determination of the law of attraction of the particles was attended at first with some difficulty, because the action which a finite magnet exerts is a compound result of the attractions and repulsions of many points. Newton had imagined the attractive force of magnetism to be inversely as the cube of the distance; but Mayer in 1760, and Lambert a few years later, asserted the law to be, in this as in other forces, the inverse square. Coulomb has the merit of having first clearly confirmed this law, by the use of his torsion-balance[4]. He established, at the same time, other very important facts; for instance, "that the directive magnetic force, which the earth exerts upon a needle, is a constant quantity, parallel to the magnetic meridian, and passing through the same point of the needle whatever be its position." This was the more important, because it was necessary, in the first place, to allow for the effect of the terrestrial force, before the mutual action of the magnets could be extricated from the phenomena[5]. Coulomb then proceeded to correct the theory of magnetism.

Coulomb's reform of the Æpinian theory, in the case of magnetism, as in that of electricity, substituted two fluids (an *austral* and a *boreal* fluid,) for the single fluid; and in this way removed the necessity under which Æpinus found himself, of supposing all the particles of iron and steel and other magnetic bodies to have a peculiar repulsion for each other, exactly equal to their attraction for the magnetic

[4] A. P. 1784, 2d Mem. p. 593. [5] p. 603.

fluid. But in the case of magnetism, another modification was necessary. It was impossible to suppose here, as in the electrical phenomena, that one of the fluids was accumulated on one extremity of a body, and the other fluid on the other extremity; for though this might appear, at first sight, to be the case in a magnetic needle, it was found that when the needle was cut into two halves, the half in which the austral fluid had seemed to predominate, acquired immediately a boreal pole opposite to its austral pole, and a similar effect followed in the other half. The same is true, into however many parts the magnetic body be cut. The way in which Coulomb modified the theory so as to reconcile it with such facts, is simple and satisfactory. He supposes[6] the magnetic body to be made up of "molecules or integral parts," or, as they were afterwards called by M. Poisson, "magnetic elements." In each of these elements, (which are extremely minute,) the fluids can be separated, so that each element has an austral and a boreal pole; but the austral pole of an element which is adjacent to the boreal pole of the next, neutralises, or nearly neutralises, its effect; so that the sensible magnetism appears only towards the extremities of the body, as it would do if the fluids could permeate the body freely. We shall have exactly the same result, as to sensible magnetic force, on the one supposition and on the other, as Coulomb showed[7].

The theory, thus freed from manifest incongruities,

[6] A. P. 1789, p. 488. [7] p. 492.

was to be reduced to calculation, and compared with theory; this was done in Coulomb's Seventh Memoir[8]. The difficulties of calculation in this, as in the electric problem, could not be entirely surmounted by the analysis of Coulomb; but by various artifices, he obtained theoretically the relative amount of magnetism at several points of a needle[9], and the proposition that the directive force of the earth on similar needles saturated with magnetism, was as the cube of their dimensions; conclusions which agreed with experiment.

The agreement thus obtained was sufficient to give a great probability to the theory; but an improvement of the methods of calculation, and a repetition of experiments, was, in this as in other cases, desirable, as a confirmation of the labours of the original theorist. These requisites, in the course of time, were supplied. The researches of Laplace and Le Gendre on the figure of the earth had (as we have already stated,) introduced some very peculiar analytical artifices, applicable to the attractions of spheroids; and these methods were employed by Biot in 1811, to show that on an elliptical spheroid, the thickness of the fluid in the direction of the radius would be as the distance from the centre[10]. But the subject was taken up in a more complete manner in 1824 by M. Poisson, who obtained general expressions for the attractions or repulsions of a body of any form whatever, mag-

[8] A. P. 1789. [9] p. 485. [10] Bull des. Sc. No. li.

netised by influence, upon a given point; and in the case of spherical bodies was able completely to solve the equations which determine these forces[11].

Previously to these theoretical investigations, Mr. Barlow had made a series of experiments on the effect of an iron sphere upon a compass needle; and had obtained empirical formulæ for the amount of the deviation of the needle, according to its dependence upon the position and magnitude of the sphere. He afterwards deduced the same formulæ from a theory which was, in fact, identical with that of Coulomb, but which he considered as different, in that it supposed the magnetic fluids to be entirely collected at the surface of the sphere. He had indeed found, by experiment, that the surface was the only part in which there was any sensible magnetism; and that a thin shell of iron would produce the same effect as a solid ball of the same diameter.

But this was, in fact, a most complete verification of Coulomb's theory. For though that theory did not suppose the magnetism to be collected solely at the surface, as Mr. Barlow found it, it followed from the theory, that the *sensible* magnetic intensity assumed the same distribution as if the fluids could permeate the whole body, instead of the "magnetic elements" only. Coulomb, indeed, had not expressly noticed the result, that the sensible magnetism would be confined to the surface of bodies; but he had found that, in a long needle, the magnetic fluid

[11] A. P. for 1821 and 2, published 1826.

might be supposed to be concentrated very near the extremities, just as it is in a long electric body. The theoretical confirmation of this rule among the other consequences of the theory, that the sensible magnetism would be dispersed at the surface,—was one of the results of Poisson's analysis. For it appeared that if the sum of the electric elements was equal to the whole body, there would be no difference between the action of a solid sphere and a very thin shell.

We may, then, consider the Coulombian theory to be fully established and verified, as a representation of the laws of magnetical phenomena. We may add, as a remarkable and valuable example of an ulterior step in the progress of sciences, Mr. Barlow's application of his experimental discovery of the superficial distribution of magnetism to the purposes of navigation. It had been found that the mass of iron which exists in a ship produces a deviation in the direction of the compass-needle, which was termed "local attraction," and which rendered the compass an erroneous guide. Mr. Barlow showed that this might be corrected by a plate of iron placed near the compass; the plate being of comparatively small mass, but, in consequence of its expanded form, and its proximity to the needle, of equivalent effect to the disturbing cause. This practical application of the theory was found to be quite successful.

But we have still to trace the progress of the theory of terrestrial magnetism.

Theory of Terrestrial Magnetism.—Gilbert had

begun a plausible course of speculation on this point. "We must reject," he says[12], "in the first place, that vulgar opinion of recent writers concerning magnetic mountains, or a certain magnetic rock, or an imaginary pole at a certain distance from the pole of the earth." For he adds, "we learn by experience, that there is no such fixed pole or term in the earth for the variation." Gilbert describes the whole earth as a magnetic globe, and attributes the variation to the irregular form of its protuberances, the solid parts only being magnetic. It was not easy to confirm or refute this opinion, but other hypotheses were tried by various writers; for instance, Halley had imagined, from the forms of the lines of equal variation, that there must be four magnetic poles; but Euler[13] showed that the "Halleian lines" would, for the most part, result from the supposition of two magnetic poles, and assigned their position so as to represent pretty well the state of the variation all over the world in 1744. But the variation was not the only phenomenon which required to be taken into account; the dip at different places, and also the intensity of the force, were to be considered. We have already mentioned Humboldt's collection of observations of the dip. These were examined by Biot, with the view of reducing them to the action of two poles in the supposed terrestrial magnetic axis. Having, at first, made the distance of these poles from the centre of the earth indefinite,

[12] Lib. iv. c. i. De Variatione. [13] Ac. Berlin, 1757.

he found that his formulæ agreed more and more nearly with the observations, as the poles were brought nearer; and that fact and theory coincided tolerably well when both poles were at the centre. In 1809[14], Krafft simplified this result, by showing that, on this supposition, the tangent of the dip was twice the tangent of the latitude of the place as measured from the magnetic equator. But Hansteen, who has devoted to the subject of terrestrial magnetism a great amount of labour and skill, has shown that, taking together all the observations which we possess, we are compelled to suppose four magnetic poles; two near the north, and two near the south pole of the terrestrial globe; and that these poles, no two of which are exactly opposite each other, are all in motion, with different velocities, some moving to the east, and some to the west. This curious collection of facts awaits the hand of future theorists, when the ripeness of time shall invite them to the task.

The various other circumstances which terrestrial magnetism exhibits;—the diurnal and annual changes of the position of the compass-needle;—the larger secular change which affects it in the course of years;—the difference of intensity at different places, and other facts, have naturally occupied philosophers with the attempt to determine, both the laws of the phenomena and their causes. But these attempts necessarily depend, not upon laws of statical magnet-

[14] Enc. Met. p. 742.

ism, such as they have been explained above; but upon the laws by which the production and intensity of magnetism in different cases are regulated;—laws which belong to a different province, and are related to a different set of principles. Thus, for example, we have not attempted to explain the discovery of the laws by which heat influences magnetism; and therefore we cannot now give an account of those theories of the facts relating to terrestrial magnetism, which depend upon the influence of temperature. The conditions of excitation of magnetism are best studied by comparing this force with other cases where the same effects are produced by very different apparent agencies; such as galvanic and thermo-electricity. To the history of these we shall presently proceed.

Conclusion.—The hypothesis of magnetic fluids, as physical realities, was never widely or strongly embraced, as that of electric fluids was. For though the hypothesis accounted, to a remarkable degree of exactness, with large classes of the phenomena, the presence of a material fluid was not indicated by facts of a different kind, such as the spark, the discharge from points, the shock, and its mechanical effects. Thus the belief of a peculiar magnetic fluid or fluids was not forced upon men's minds; and the doctrine above stated was probably entertained by most of its adherents, chiefly as a means of expressing the laws of phenomena in their elementary form.

One other observation occurs here. We have

seen that the supposition of a fluid moveable from one part of bodies to another, and capable of accumulation in different parts of the surface, appeared at first to be as distinctly authorized by magnetic as by electric phenomena; and yet that it afterwards appeared, by calculation, that this must be considered as a derivative result; no real transfer of fluid taking place except within the limits of the insensible particles of the body. Without attempting to found a formula of philosophizing on this circumstance, we may observe, that this occurrence, like the disproof of heat as a material fluid, shows the possibility of an hypothesis which shall very exactly satisfy many phenomena, and yet be incomplete: it shows, too, the necessity of bringing facts of all kinds to bear on the hypothesis; thus, in this case it was requisite to take into account the facts of junction and separation of magnetic bodies, as well as their attractions and repulsions.

If we have seen reason to doubt the doctrine of electric fluids as physical realities, we cannot help pronouncing upon the magnetic fluids as having still more insecure claims to a material existence, even on the grounds just stated. But we may add considerations still more decisive; for at a further stage of discovery, as we shall see, magnetic and electric action were found to be connected in the closest manner, so as to lead to the persuasion of their being different effects of one common cause. After those discoveries, no philosopher would dream of assuming electric fluids

and magnetic fluids as distinct material agents. Yet even now the nature of the dependence of magnetism upon any other cause is extremely difficult to conceive. But till we have noticed some of the discoveries to which we have alluded, we cannot even speculate about that dependence. We now, therefore, proceed to sketch the history of these discoveries.

BOOK XIII.

MECHANICO-CHEMICAL SCIENCES.

(CONTINUED.)

HISTORY OF GALVANISM,

OR

VOLTAIC ELECTRICITY.

Percussæ gelido trepidant sub pectore fibræ,
Et nova desuetis subrepens vita medullis
Miscetur morti: tunc omnis palpitat artus
Tenduntur nervi; nec se tellure cadaver
Paullatim per membra levat; terrâque repulsum est
Erectumque simul.

LUCAN. vi. 752.

The form which lay before inert and dead,
Sudden a piercing thrill of change o'erspread;
Returning life gleams in the stony face,
The fibres quiver and the sinews brace,
Move the stiff limbs;—nor did the body rise
With tempered strength which genial life supplies,
But upright starting, its full stature held,
As though the earth the supine corse repelled.

CHAPTER I.

Discovery of Voltaic Electricity.

We have given the name of *mechanico-chemical* to the class of sciences now under our consideration; for these sciences are concerned with cases in which mechanical effects, that is, attractions and repulsions, are produced; while the conditions under which these effects occur, depend, as we shall hereafter see, on chemical relations. In that branch of these sciences which we have just treated of, Magnetism, the mechanical phenomena were obvious, but their connexion with chemical causes was by no means apparent, and, indeed, has not yet come under our notice.

The subject to which we now proceed, Galvanism, belongs to the same group, but, at first sight, exhibits only the other, the chemical, portion of the features of the class; for the connexion of galvanic phenomena with chemical action was soon made out, but the mechanical effects which accompany them were not examined till the examination was required by a new train of discovery. It is to be observed, that I do not include in the class of mechanical effects the convulsive motions in the limbs of animals which are occasioned by galvanic action; for these movements are produced, not by attraction and repulsion, but by muscular irritability; and though

they indicate the existence of a peculiar agency, cannot be used to measure its intensity and law.

The various examples of the class of agents which we here consider,—magnetism, electricity, galvanism, electro-magnetism, thermo-electricity,—differ from each other principally in the circumstances by which they are called into action; and these differences are in reality of a chemical nature, and will have to be considered when we come to treat of the inductions by which the general principles of chemical theory are established. In the present part of our task, therefore, we must take for granted the chemical conditions on which the excitation of these various kinds of action depends, and trace the history of the discovery of their mechanical laws only. This rule will much abridge the account we have here to give of the progress of discovery in the provinces to which I have just referred.

The first step in this career of discovery was that made by Galvani, Professor of Anatomy at Bologna. In 1790, electricity, as an experimental science, was nearly stationary. The impulse given to its progress by the splendid phenomena of the Leyden phial had almost died away; Coulomb was employed in systematizing the theory of the electric fluid, as shown by its statical effects; but in all the other parts of the subject, no great principle or new result had for some time been detected. The first announcement of Galvani's discovery in 1791 excited great notice, for it was given forth as a manifestation of electricity under a new and remarkable character; namely, as residing

in the muscles of animals[1]. The limbs of a dissected frog were observed to move, when touched with pieces of two different metals; the agent which produced these motions was conceived to be identified with electricity, and was termed *animal electricity;* and Galvani's experiments were repeated, with various modifications, in all parts of Europe, exciting much curiosity, and giving rise to many speculations.

It is our business to determine the character of each great discovery which appears in the progress of science. Men are fond of repeating that such discoveries are most commonly the result of accident; and we have seen reason to reject this opinion, since that preparation of thought by which the accident produces discovery is the most important of the conditions on which the successful event depends. Such accidents are like a spark which discharges a gun already loaded and pointed. In the case of Galvani, indeed, the discovery may, with more propriety than usual, be said to have been casual; but, in the form in which it was first noted, it exhibited no important novelty. His frog was lying on a table near the conductor of an electrical machine, and the convulsions appeared only when a spark was taken from the machine. If Galvani had been as good a physicist as he was an anatomist, he would probably have seen that the movements so occasioned, proved only that the muscles or nerves, or the two together, formed a very sensitive indi-

[1] De Viribus Electricis in Motu Musculari. Comm. Bonon. t. vii. 1792.

cator of electrical action. It was when he produced such motions by contact of metals alone, that he obtained an important and fundamental fact in science.

The analysis of this fact into its real and essential conditions was the work of Alexander Volta, another Italian professor. Volta, indeed, possessed that knowledge of the subject of electricity which made a hint like that of Galvani the basis of a new science. Galvani appears never to have acquired much general knowledge of electricity: Volta, on the other hand, had laboured at this branch of knowledge from the age of eighteen, through a period of nearly thirty years; and had invented an *electrophorus* and an *electrical condenser*, which showed great experimental skill. When he turned his attention to the experiments made by Galvani, he observed that the author of them had been far more surprised than he needed to be, at those results in which an electrical spark was produced; and that it was only in the cases in which no such apparatus was employed, that the observations could justly be considered as indicating 'a new law, or a new kind of electricity'[2]. He soon satisfied himself[3] (about 1794) that the essential conditions of this kind of action depended on the metals;—that it is brought into play most decidedly when two different metals touch each other, and are connected by any moist body;—and that the parts of animals which had been used discharged the office both of

[2] Phil. Trans. 1793, p. 21. [3] See Fischer, viii. 625.

such moist bodies, and of very sensitive electrometers. The *animal* electricity of Galvani might, he observed, be with more propriety called *metallic* electricity.

The recognition of this agency as a peculiar kind of *electricity*, arose in fact perhaps, at first, from the confusion made by Galvani between the cases in which his electrical machine was, and those in which it was not, employed. But the identity was confirmed by its being found that the known difference of electrical conductors and non-conductors regulated the conduction of the new influence. The more exact determination of the relation of the new facts to those of electricity was a succeeding step of the progress of the subject.

The term "animal electricity" has been superseded by others, of which *galvanism* is perhaps the most familiar. I think it will appear from what has been said, that Volta's office in this discovery is of a much higher and more philosophical kind than that of Galvani; and it would, on this account, be more fitting to employ the term *voltaic electricity;* which, indeed, is very commonly used, especially by our most recent and comprehensive writers.

Volta more fully still established his claim as the main originator of this science by his next step. When some of those who repeated the experiments of Galvani had expressed a wish that there was some method of multiplying the effect of *this* electricity, such as the Leyden phial supplies for common electricity, they probably thought their wishes far from a

realisation. But the *voltaic pile*, which Volta described in the Philosophical Transactions for 1800, completely satisfies this aspiration; and was, in fact, a more important step in the history of electricity than the Leyden jar had been. It has since undergone various modifications, of which the most important was that introduced by Cruikshanks, who[1] substituted a trough for a pile. But in all cases the principle of the instrument was the same;—a continued repetition of the triple combination of two metals and a fluid in contact, so as to form a circuit which returns into itself.

Such an instrument is capable of causing effects of great intensity; as seen both in the production of light and heat, and in chemical changes. But the discovery with which we are here concerned, is not the details and consequences of the effects, (which belong to chemistry,) but the analysis of the conditions under which such effects take place; and this we may consider as completed by Volta at the epoch of which we speak.

[1] Fischer, viii. p. 683.

CHAPTER II.

Reception and Confirmation of the Discovery of Voltaic Electricity.

Galvani's experiments excited a great interest all over Europe, in consequence partly of a circumstance which, as we have seen, was unessential, the muscular contractions and various sensations which they occasioned. Galvani himself had not only considered the animal element of the circuit as the origin of the electricity, but had framed a theory[1], in which he compared the muscles to charged jars, and the nerves to the discharging wires; and a controversy was, for some time, carried on, in Italy, between the adherents of Galvani and those of Volta[2].

The galvanic experiments, and especially those which appeared to have a physiological bearing, were verified and extended by a number of the most active philosophers of Europe, and especially William von Humboldt. A commission of the Institute of France, appointed in 1797, repeated many of the known experiments, but does not seem to have decided any disputed points. The researches of this commission referred rather to the discoveries of Galvani than to those of Volta: the latter were, indeed, hardly known in France till the conquest of

[1] Fischer, viii. 613. [2] Ib. viii. 619.

Italy by Bonaparte, in 1801. France was, at the period of these discoveries, separated from all other countries by war, and especially from England[3], where Volta's Memoirs were published.

The political revolutions of Italy affected, in very different manners, the two discoverers of whom we speak. Galvani refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Cisalpine republic, which the French conqueror established; he was consequently stripped of all his offices; and, deprived, by the calamities of the times, of most of his relations, he sank into poverty, melancholy, and debility. At last his scientific reputation induced the republican rulers to decree his restoration to his professorial chair; but his claims were recognised too late, and he died without profiting by this intended favour, in 1798.

Volta, on the other hand, was called to Paris by Bonaparte as a man of science, and invested with honours, emoluments, and titles. The conqueror himself, indeed, was strongly interested by this train of research[4]. He himself founded valuable prizes, expressly with a view to promote its prosecution. At this period, there was something in this subject peculiarly attractive to his Italian mind; for the first glimpses of discoveries of great promise have always excited an enthusiastic activity of speculation in the philosophers of Italy, though generally accompanied with a want of precise thought. It is narrated[5] of Bonaparte, that after seeing the decom-

[3] Biog. Univ., Art. Volta, (by Biot.)

[4] Becquerel, Traité d'Electr. t. i. p. 107. [5] Ib. p. 108.

position of the salts by means of the voltaic pile, he turned to Corvisart, his physician, and said, "Here, doctor, is the image of life; the vertebral column is the pile, the liver is the negative, the bladder the positive, pole." The importance of voltaic researches is not less than it was estimated by Bonaparte; but the results to which it was to lead were of a kind altogether different from those which thus suggested themselves to his mind. The connexion of mechanical and chemical action was the first great point to be dealt with; and for this purpose the laws of the mechanical action of voltaic electricity were to be studied.

It will readily be supposed that the voltaic researches, thus begun, opened a number of interesting topics of examination and discussion. These, however, it does not belong to our place to dwell upon at present; since they formed parts of the theory of the subject, which was not completed till light had been thrown upon it from other quarters. The identity of galvanism with electricity, for instance, was at first, as we have intimated, rather conjectured than proved. It was denied by Dr. Fowler, in 1793; was supposed to be confirmed[6] by Dr. Wells two years later; but was, still later, questioned by Davy. The nature of the operation of the pile was variously conceived. Volta himself had obtained a view of it which succeeding researches confirmed, when he asserted[6], in 1800, that it resembled an electric

[6] Phil. Trans. p. 403.

battery feebly charged and constantly renewing its charge. In pursuance of this view, the common electrical action was, at a later period (for instance by Ampère, in 1820), called *electrical tension*, while the voltaic action was called the *electrical current*, or *electromotive action*. The different effects produced, by increasing the size and the number of the plates in the voltaic trough, were also very remarkable. The power of producing heat was found to depend on the size of the plates; the power of producing chemical changes, on the other hand, was augmented by the number of plates of which the battery consisted. The former effect was referred to the increased *quantity*, the latter to the *intensity*, of the electric fluid. We mention these distinctions at present, rather for the purpose of explaining the language in which the results of the succeeding investigations are narrated, than with the intention of representing the hypotheses and measures which they imply, as clearly established, at the period of which we speak. For that purpose new discoveries were requisite, which we have soon to relate.

CHAPTER III.

Discovery of the Laws of the Mutual Attraction and Repulsion of Voltaic Currents.—Ampere.

In order to show the place of voltaic electricity among the mechanico-chemical sciences, we must speak of its mechanical laws as separate from the laws of electro-magnetic action; although, in fact, it was only in consequence of the forces which conducting voltaic wires exert upon magnets, that those forces were detected which they exert upon each other. This latter discovery was made by M. Ampère; and the extraordinary rapidity and sagacity with which he caught the suggestion of such forces, from the electro-magnetic experiments of Oersted, (of which we shall speak in the next chapter,) well entitle him to be considered as a great and independent discoverer. As he truly says[1], "it by no means followed, that because a conducting wire exerted a force on a magnet, two conducting wires must exert a force on each other; for two pieces of soft iron, both of which affect a magnet, do not affect each other." But immediately on the promulgation of Oersted's experiments, in 1820, Ampère leapt forwards to a general theory of the facts, of which

[1] Théorie des Phénom. Electrodynamiques, p. 113.

theory the mutual attraction and repulsion of conducting voltaic wires was a fundamental supposition. The supposition was immediately verified by direct trial; and the laws of this attraction and repulsion were soon determined, with great experimental ingenuity, and a very remarkable command of the resources of analysis. But the experimental and analytical investigation of the mutual action of voltaic or electrical currents, was so mixed up with the examination of the laws of electro-magnetism, which had given occasion to the investigation, that we must not treat the two provinces of research as separate. The mention in this place, premature as it might appear, of the labours of Ampère, arises inevitably from his being the author of a beautiful and comprehensive generalisation, which not only included the phenomena exhibited by the new combinations of Oersted, but also disclosed forces which existed in arrangements already familiar, although they had never been detected till the theory pointed out how they were to be looked for.

CHAPTER IV.

Discovery of Electro-magnetic Action.—Oersted.

The impulse which the discovery of galvanism, in 1791, and of the voltaic pile, in 1800, had given to the study of electricity as a mechanical science, had nearly died away in 1820. It was in that year that M. Oersted, of Copenhagen, announced that the conducting wire of a voltaic circuit acts upon a magnetic needle; and thus recalled into activity that endeavour to connect magnetism with electricity, which, though apparently on many accounts so hopeful, had hitherto been attended with no success. Oersted found that the needle has a tendency to place itself *at right angles* to the wire;—a kind of action altogether different from any which had been suspected.

This observation was of vast importance; and the analysis of its conditions and consequences employed the best philosophers in Europe immediately on its promulgation. It is impossible, without great injustice, to refuse great merit to Oersted as the author of the discovery. We have already said, that men appear generally inclined to believe remarkable discoveries to be accidental, and the discovery of Oersted has been spoken of as a casual and insulated experiment[1]. Yet Oersted had been looking for

[1] See Schelling ueber Faraday's Entdeckung, p. 27.

such an *accident* probably more carefully and perseveringly than any other person in Europe. In 1807, he had published[2] a work, in which he professed that his purpose was "to ascertain whether electricity, in its most latent state, had any effect on the magnet." And he, as I know from his own declaration, considered his discovery as the natural sequel and confirmation of his early researches; as, indeed, it fell in readily and immediately with speculations on these subjects then very prevalent in Germany. It was an accident like that by which a man guesses a riddle on which his mind has long been employed.

Besides the confirmation of Oersted's observations by many experimenters, great additions were made to his facts: of these, one of the most important was due to Ampère. Since the earth is in fact magnetic, the voltaic wire ought to be affected by terrestrial magnetism alone, and ought to tend to assume a position depending on the position of the compass-needle. At first, the attempts to produce this effect failed, but soon, with a more delicate apparatus, the result was found to agree with the anticipation.

It is impossible here to dwell on any of the subsequent researches, except so far as they are essential to our great object, the progress towards a general theory of the subject. I proceed, therefore, immediately to the attempts made towards this object.

[2] Ampère, p. 69.

CHAPTER V.

Discovery of the Laws of Electro-magnetic Action.

On attempting to analyze the electro-magnetic phenomena observed by Oersted and others into their simplest forms, they appeared, at least at first sight, to be different from any mechanical actions which had yet been observed. It seemed as if the conducting wire exerted on the pole of the magnet a force which was not attractive or repulsive, but *transverse*;—not tending to draw the point acted on nearer, or to push it further off, in the line which reached from the acting point, but urging it to move at right angles to this line. The forces appeared to be such as Kepler had dreamt of in the infancy of mechanical conceptions; rather than such as those of which Newton had established the existence in the solar system, and such as he, and all his successors, had supposed to be the only kinds of force which exist in nature. The north pole of the needle moved as if it were impelled by a vortex revolving round the wire in one direction, while the south pole seemed to be driven by an opposite vortex. The case seemed novel, and almost paradoxical.

It was soon established by experiments, made in a great variety of forms, that the mechanical action was really of this transverse kind. And a curious

result was obtained, which a little while before would have been considered as altogether incredible;—that this force would cause a constant and rapid revolution of either of the bodies about the other;—of the conducting wire about the magnet, or of the magnet about the conducting wire. This was effected by Mr. Faraday, in 1821.

The laws which regulated the intensity of this force, with reference to the distance and position of the bodies, now naturally came to be examined. Biot and Savart in France, and Barlow in England, instituted such measures; and satisfied themselves that the elementary force followed the law of magnitude of all known elementary forces, in being inversely as the square of the distance; although, in its direction, it was so entirely different from other forces. But the investigation of the *laws of phenomena* of the subject was too closely connected with the choice of a mechanical theory, to be established previously and independently, as had been done in astronomy. The experiments gave complex results, and the analysis of these into their elementary actions was almost an indispensable step in order to disentangle their laws. We must, therefore, state the progress of this analysis.

CHAPTER VI.

Theory of Electrodynamical Action.

Ampère's Theory.—Nothing can show in a more striking manner the advanced condition of physical speculation in 1820, than the reduction of the strange and complex phenomena of electromagnetism to a simple and general theory as soon as they were published. Instead of a gradual establishment of laws of phenomena and theories more and more perfect, occupying ages, as in the case of astronomy, or generations, as in the instances of magnetism and electricity, a few months sufficed for the whole process of generalisation; and the experiments made at Copenhagen were announced at Paris and London, almost at the same time with the skilful analysis and comprehensive inductions of Ampère.

Yet we should err if we should suppose, from the celerity with which the task was executed, that it was an easy one. There were required, in the author of such a theory, not only those clear conceptions of the relations of space and force, which are the first conditions of all sound theory, and a full possession of the experiments; but also a masterly command of the mathematical arms by which alone the victory could be gained, and a sagacious selection of proper experiments which might decide the fate of the proposed hypothesis.

It is true, that the nature of the requisite hypothesis was not difficult to see in a certain vague and limited way. The conducting-wire and the magnetic needle had a tendency to arrange themselves at right angles to one another. This might be represented by supposing the wire to be made up of transverse magnetic needles, or by supposing the needle to be made up of transverse conducting-wires; for it was easy to conceive forces which should bring corresponding elements, either magnetic or voltaic, into parallel positions; and then the general phenomena above stated would be accounted for. And the choice between the two modes of conception, appeared at first sight a matter of indifference. The majority of philosophers at first adopted, or at least employed, the former method, as Oersted in Germany, Berzelius in Sweden, Wollaston in England.

Ampère adopted the other view, according to which the magnet is made up of conducting-wires in a transverse position. But he did for his hypothesis what no one did or could do for the other: he showed that it was the only one which would account, without additional and arbitrary suppositions, for the facts of *continued* motion in electromagnetic cases. And he further elevated his theory to a higher rank of generality, by showing that it explained,—not only the action of a conducting-wire upon a magnet, but also two other classes of facts, already spoken of in this history,—the action of magnets upon each other, —and the action of conducting-wires upon each other.

The deduction of such particular cases from the

theory, required, as may easily be imagined, some complex calculations: but the deduction being satisfactory, it will be seen that Ampère's theory conformed to that description which we have repeatedly had to point out as the usual character of a true and stable theory; namely, that besides accounting for the class of phenomena which suggested it, it supplies an unforeseen explanation of other known facts. For the mutual action of magnets, which was supposed to be already reduced to a satisfactory theoretical form by Coulomb, was not contemplated by Ampère in the formation of his hypothesis; and the mutual action of voltaic currents, though tried only in consequence of the suggestion of the theory, was clearly a fact distinct from electromagnetic action; yet all these facts flowed alike from the theory. And thus Ampère brought into view a class of forces for which the term "electromagnetic" was too limited, and which he designated[1] by the appropriate term *electrodynamic*; distinguishing them by this expression, as the forces of an electric *current*, from the *statical* effects of electricity which we had formerly to treat of. This term has passed into common use among scientific writers, and remains the record and stamp of the success of the Amperian induction.

The first promulgation of Ampère's views was by a communication to the French Academy of Sciences, September the 18th, 1820; Oersted's discoveries having reached Paris only in the preceding July. At almost every meeting of the Academy during the

[1] Ann. de Chim., tom xx. p. 60 (1822).

remainder of that year and the beginning of the following one, he had new developements or new confirmations of his theory to announce. The most hypothetical part of his theory,—the proposition that magnets might be considered in their effects as identical with spiral voltaic wires,—he asserted from the very first. The mutual attraction and repulsion of voltaic wires,—the laws of this action,—the deduction of the observed facts from it by calculation,—the determination, by new experiments, of the constant quantities which entered into his formulæ,—followed in rapid succession. The theory must be briefly stated. It had already been seen that parallel voltaic currents attracted each other; when, instead of being parallel, they were situate in any directions, they still exerted attractive and repulsive forces depending on the distance, and on the directions of each element of both currents. Add to this doctrine the hypothetical constitution of magnets, namely, that a voltaic current runs round the axis of each particle, and we have the means of calculating a vast variety of results which may be compared with experiment. But the laws of the elementary forces required further fixation. What *functions* are they of the distance and the directions of the elements?

To extract from experiment an answer to this inquiry was far from easy, for the elementary forces were mathematically connected with the observed facts, by a double mathematical integration;—a long, and, while the constant co-efficients remained undefined, hardly a possible operation. Ampère made

some trials in this way, but his happier genius suggested to him a better path. It occurred to him, that if his integrals, without being specially found, could be shown to vanish upon the whole, under certain conditions of the problem, this circumstance would correspond to arrangements of his apparatus in which a state of equilibrium was preserved, however the form of some of the parts might be changed. He found two such cases, which were of great importance to the theory. The first of these cases proved that the force exerted by any element of the voltaic wire might be resolved into other forces by a theorem resembling the well-known proposition of the parallelogram of forces. This was proved by showing that the action of a straight wire is the same with that of another wire which joins the same extremities, but is bent and contorted in any way whatever. But it still remained necessary to determine two fundamental quantities; one of which expressed the power of the distance according to which the force varied; the other, the degree in which the force is affected by the obliquity of the elements. One of the general causes of equilibrium[2], of which we have spoken, gave a relation between these two quantities; and as the power was naturally, and, as it afterwards appeared, rightly, conjectured to be the inverse square, the other quantity also was determined; and the general problem of electrodynamical action was fully solved.

[2] Communication to the Acad. Sc., June 10, 1822. See Ampère, Recueil, p. 292.

If Ampère had not been an accomplished analyst, he would not have been able to discover the condition on which the nullity of the integral in this case depended[3]. And throughout his labours, we find reason to admire, both his mathematical skill, and his steadiness of thought; although these excellencies are by no means accompanied throughout with corresponding clearness and elegance of exposition in his writings.

Reception of Ampère's Theory.—Clear mathematical conceptions, and some familiarity with mathematical operations, were needed by readers also, in order to appreciate the evidence of the theory; and, therefore, we need not feel any surprise if it was, on its publication and establishment, hailed with far less enthusiasm than so remarkable a triumph of generalising power might appear to deserve. For some time, indeed, the greater portion of the public were naturally held in suspense by the opposing weight of rival names. The Amperian theory did not make its way without contention and competition. The electro-magnetic experiments, from their first appearance, gave a clear promise of some new and wide generalisation; and held out a prize of honour and fame to him who should be first in giving the right interpretation of the riddle. In France, the emulation for such reputation is perhaps more vigilant and anxious than it is elsewhere; and we see, on this as on other occasions, the scientific host of Paris springing upon a new subject with an

[3] Rec. p. 314.

impetuosity which, in a short time, runs into controversies for priority or for victory. In this case, Biot, as well as Ampère, endeavoured to reduce the electro-magnetic phenomena to general laws. The discussion between him and Ampère turned on some points which are curious. Biot was disposed to consider as an elementary action, the force which an element of a voltaic wire exerts upon a magnetic particle, and which is, as we have seen, at right angles to their mutual distance; and he conceived that the equal reaction which necessarily accompanies this action acts oppositely to the action, not in the same line, but in a parallel line, at the other extremity of the distance; thus forming a primitive *couple*, to use a technical expression borrowed from mechanics. To this Ampère objected[1], that the *direct* opposition of all elementary action and reaction was a universal and necessary mechanical law. He showed too that such a couple as had been assumed, would follow as a *derivative* result from his theory. And in comparing his own theory with that in which the voltaic wire is assimilated to a collection of transverse magnets, he was also able to prove that no such assemblage of forces acting to and from fixed points, as the forces of magnets do act, could produce a continued motion like that discovered by Faraday. This, indeed, was only the well-known demonstration of the impossibility of a perpetual motion. If, instead of a collection of magnets, the adverse theorists had spoken of a magnetic

[1] Ampère, Théorie, p. 154.

current, they might probably interpret their expressions so as to explain the facts; that is, if they considered every element of such a current as a magnet, and consequently, every point of it as being a north and a south pole at the same instant. But to introduce such a conception of a magnetic current was to abandon all the laws of magnetic action hitherto established; and consequently to lose all that gave the hypothesis its value. The idea of an electric current, on the other hand, was so far from being a new and hazardous assumption, that it had already been forced upon philosophers from the time of Volta; and in this current, the relation of *preceding* and *succeeding,* which necessarily existed between the extremities of any element, introduced that relative polarity on which the success of the explanations of the facts depended. And thus in this controversy, the theory of Ampère has a great and undeniable superiority over the rival hypotheses.

CHAPTER VII.

Consequences of the Electrodynamic Theory.

It is not necessary to state the various applications which were soon made of the electro-magnetic discoveries. But we may notice one of the most important,—the *galvanometer*, an instrument which, by enabling the philosopher to detect and to measure extremely minute electrodynamic actions, gave an impulse to the subject similar to that which it received from the invention of the Leyden phial, or the voltaic pile. The strength of the voltaic current was measured, in this instrument, by the deflection produced in a compass-needle; and its sensibility was multiplied by making the wire pass repeatedly above and below the needle. Schweigger, of Halle, was one of the first devisers of this apparatus.

The substitution of electro-magnets, that is, of spiral tubes composed of voltaic wires, for common magnets, gave rise to a variety of curious apparatus and speculations; but on these and other subjects of the same kind I shall not dwell.

The galvanometer led to the discovery of another class of cases in which the electrodynamical action was called into play, namely, those in which a circuit, composed of two metals only, became electro-

magnetic by *heating* one part of it. This discovery of *thermo-electricity* was made by Professor Seebeck of Berlin, in 1822, and prosecuted by various persons; especially by Professor Cumming[1] of Cambridge, who, early in 1823, extended the examination of this property to most of the metals, and determined their thermo-electric order. But as these investigations exhibited no new mechanical effects of electromotive forces, they do not now further concern us; and we pass on, at present, to a case in which such forces act in a manner different from any of those already described.

[1] Camb. Trans. vol. ii. p. 62. On the Developement of Electro-Magnetism by Heat.

CHAPTER VIII.

Discovery of the Laws of Magneto-Electric Induction.—Faraday.

It was clearly established by Ampère, as we have seen, that magnetic action is a peculiar form of electromotive actions, and that, in this kind of agency, action and reaction are equal and opposite. It appeared to follow almost irresistibly from these considerations, that magnetism might be made to produce electricity, as electricity could be made to imitate all the effects of magnetism. Yet for a long time the attempts to obtain such a result were fruitless. Faraday, in 1825, endeavoured to make the conducting-wire of the voltaic circuit excite electricity in a neighbouring wire by induction, as the conductor charged with common electricity would have done, but he obtained no such effect. If this attempt had succeeded, the magnet, which, for all such purposes, is an assemblage of voltaic circuits, might also have been made to excite electricity. About the same time, an experiment was made in France by Arago, which really involved the effect thus sought; though this effect was not extricated from the complex phenomenon, till Faraday began his splendid career of discovery on this subject in 1832. Arago's observation was, that the rapid revolution of a con-

ducting-plate in the neighbourhood of a magnet, gave rise to a force acting on the magnet. In England, Messrs. Barlow and Christie, Herschel and Babbage, repeated, and tried to analyse this experiment; but referring the forces only to conditions of space and time, and overlooking the real cause, the electrical currents produced by the motion, these philosophers were altogether unsuccessful in their labours. In 1831, Faraday again sought for electro-dynamical induction, and after some futile trials, at last found it in a form different from that in which he had looked for it. It was then seen, that at the precise time of making or breaking the contact which closed the galvanic circuit, a momentary effect was induced in a neighbouring wire, but disappeared instantly[1]. Once in possession of this fact, Mr. Faraday ran rapidly up the ladder of discovery, to the general point of view.—Instead of suddenly making or breaking the contact of the inducing circuit, a similar effect was produced by removing the inducible wire nearer to or further from the circuit[2];—the effects were increased by the proximity of soft iron[3];—when the soft iron was affected by an ordinary magnet instead of the voltaic wire, the same effect still recurred[4];—and thus it appeared, that by making and breaking magnetic contact, a momentary electric current was produced. It was produced also by moving the magnet[5];—or by moving the wire

[1] Phil. Trans. 1832, p. 127, First Series, Art. 10.
[2] Art. 18. [3] Art. 28. [4] Art. 37.
[5] Art. 39.

with reference to the magnet[6]. Finally, it was found that the earth might supply the place of a magnet in this as in other experiments[7]; and the mere motion of a wire, under proper circumstances, produced in it, it appeared, a momentary electric current[8]. These facts were curiously confirmed by the results in special cases. They explained Arago's experiments; for the momentary effect became permanent by the revolution of the plate. And without using the magnet, a revolving plate became an electrical machine[9];—a revolving globe exhibited electro-magnetic action[10], the circuit being complete in the globe itself without the addition of any wire;—and a mere motion of the wire of a galvanometer produced an electrodynamic effect upon its needle[11].

But the question occurs, What is the general law which determines the direction of electric currents thus produced by the joint effects of motion and magnetism? Nothing but a peculiar steadiness and clearness in his conceptions of space, could have enabled Mr. Faraday to detect the law of this phenomenon. For the question required that he should determine the mutual relations in space which connect the magnetic poles, the position of the wire, the direction of the wire's motion, and the electrical current produced in it. This was no easy problem; indeed, the mere relation of the magnetic to the

[6] Art. 53. [7] Second Series, Phil. Trans. p. 163.
[8] Art. 141. [9] Art. 150. [10] Art. 164.
[11] Art. 171.

electric forces, the one set being perpendicular to the other, is of itself sufficient to perplex the mind; as we have seen in the history of the electrodynamic discoveries. But Mr. Faraday appears to have seized at once the law of the phenomena. "The relation," he says[12], "which holds between the magnetic pole, the moving wire or metal, and the direction of the current evolved, is very simple, (so it seemed to him,) although rather difficult to express." He represents it by referring position and motion to the "magnetic curves," which go from a magnetic pole to the opposite pole. The current in the wire sets one way or the other, according to the direction in which the motion of the wire cuts these curves. And thus he was enabled, at the end of his Second Series of Researches (December, 1831), to give, in general terms, the law of nature to which may be referred the extraordinary number of new and curious experiments which he has stated[13];—namely, that if a wire move so as to cut a magnetic curve, a power is called into action which tends to urge a magnetic current through the wire; and that if a mass move so that its parts do not move in the same direction across the magnetic curves, and with the same angular velocity, electrical currents are called into play.

This rule, thus simple from its generality, though inevitably complex in every special case, may be looked upon as supplying the first demand of philosophy, *the law of the phenomena;* and thereupon arises naturally the consequent inquiry, their *cause.*

[12] First Series, Art. 114. [13] Art. 256—264.

This has hardly yet been brought into clear view, and therefore here, where our business is to narrate only what has already been accomplished, we have little more to say. Yet we may observe, that what has been called *induction* exhibits, in a manner which cannot be overlooked, the character of a *reaction*, and we may almost say, of a mechanical reaction. Mr. Faraday appears to have had this conclusion forced upon him. In his Ninth Series (Dec. 8, 1834,) he argues that magnetism and electricity must be convertible states. "How else," he adds, "can a current of a given intensity and quantity be able, by its direct action, to sustain a state, which when allowed to react (at the cessation of the original current,) shall produce a second current, having an intensity and quantity far greater than the generating one?" It will be recollected that, according to the Amperian theory, electricity and magnetism are identical. If we assume the material reality of the electrical fluid, or any supposition mechanically equivalent to this, we cannot help having the notion of inertia suggested, by the kind of reaction which a wire exhibits when it suffers electrodynamical induction. For by the laws of mechanics, a substance, when put in motion by another substance, produces, at the first instant, an impulse opposite to that of the motion; if the velocity be uniform, no further effort is perceived till the motion is stopped; and at that instant, an impulse is produced in the direction of the motion. Now this description applies alike to mechanical impact, and to electrodynamical induction.

I should, therefore, conceive that no more general or appropriate term can be found to describe the phenomena here spoken of, than *electrodynamic reaction.* Our conception of the mechanical properties of the electric fluid is necessarily, as yet, somewhat obscure; and we know very imperfectly the manner in which an electric current sets a neighbouring one in motion. Yet I think it cannot be doubted that the same beautiful theory of Ampère, which explains so well all the laws of electrodynamical action, not only admits, but requires, that, if induction in such cases do exist, it shall be accompanied with a reaction, following laws like those which Mr. Faraday has unravelled with such exquisite skill. But Mr. Faraday himself does not appear to admit this view. "The first thought that arises in the mind is," he says[14], "that the electricity circulates with something like momentum or inertia in the wire, and that thus a long wire produces effects at the instant the current is stopped, which a short wire cannot produce. Such an explanation is, however, at once set aside by the fact, that the same length of wire produces the effects in very different degrees, according as it is simply extended, or made into a helix, or forms the circuit of an electro-magnet." This argument appears to me to be not quite decisive; for we can imagine the inertia to be altered by altering the figure of the wire as easily as by altering its length. But my business here is to narrate, rather than to discuss discoveries; and, however it may be sus-

[14] Art. 1077.

ceptible of future explanation, we cannot doubt that the view which has been disclosed of the effects of magneto-electric induction, whether or not it be rightly described as electrodynamic reaction, is a step of the highest importance in the progress of this most interesting mechanico-chemical science.

CHAPTER IX.

Transition to Chemical Science.

The preceding train of generalisation may justly appear extensive, and of itself well worthy of admiration. Yet we are to consider all that has there been established as only one-half of the science to which it belongs,—one limb of the colossal form of chemistry. We have ascertained, we will suppose, the laws of electric polarity; but we have then to ask, What is the relation of this polarity to chemical composition? This was the great problem which, constantly present to the minds of electro-chemical inquirers, drew them on, with the promise of some deep and comprehensive insight into the mechanism of nature. Long tasks of research, though only subsidiary to this, were cheerfully undertaken. Thus Faraday[1] describes himself as compelled to set about satisfying himself of the identity of common, animal, and voltaic electricity, as "the decision of a doubtful point which interfered with the extension of his views, and destroyed the strictness of his reasoning." Having established this identity, he proceeded with his grand undertaking of electro-chemical research.

The connexion of electrical currents with che-

[1] Dec. 1832. Researches, 266.

mical action, though kept out of sight in the account we have hitherto given, was never forgotten by the experimenters; for, in fact, the modes in which electrical currents were excited, were chemical actions;—the action of acids and metals on each other in the voltaic trough, or in some other form. The dependence of the electrical effect on these chemical actions, and still more, the chemical actions produced by the agency of the poles of the circuit, had been carefully studied; and we must now relate with what success.

But in what terms shall we present this narration? We have spoken of chemical actions,—but what kind of actions are these? *Decomposition*; the *resolution* of compounds into their ingredients; the separation of *acids* from *bases*; the reduction of bodies to *simple elements*. These names open to us a new drama; they are words which belong to a different set of relations of things, a different train of scientific inductions, a different system of generalisations, from any with which we have hitherto been concerned. We must learn to understand these phrases, before we can advance in our history of human knowledge.

And how are we to learn the meaning of this collection of words? In what other language shall it be explained? In what terms shall we define these new expressions? To this we are compelled to reply, that we cannot translate these terms into any ordinary language;—that we cannot define them in any terms already familiar to us. Here, as in all

other branches of knowledge, the meaning of words is to be sought in the progress of thought; the history of science is our dictionary; the steps of scientific induction are our definitions. It is only by going back through the successful researches of men respecting the composition and elements of bodies, that we can learn in what sense such terms must be understood, so as to convey real knowledge. In order that they may have a meaning for us, we must inquire what meaning they had in the minds of the authors of our discoveries.

And thus we cannot advance a step, till we have brought up our history of chemistry to the level of our history of electricity;—till we have studied the progress of the analytical, as well as the mechanical sciences. We are compelled to pause and look backwards here; just as happened in the history of astronomy, when we arrived at the brink of the great mechanical inductions of Newton, and found that we must trace the history of mechanics, before we could proceed to mechanical astronomy. The terms "force, attraction, inertia, momentum," sent us back into preceding centuries then, just as the terms "composition" and "element," send us back now.

Nor is it to a small extent that we have thus to double back upon our past advance. Next to astronomy, chemistry is one of the most ancient of sciences;—the field of the earliest attempts of man to command and understand nature. It has held men for centuries by a kind of fascination; and

innumerable and endless are the varied labours, the failures and successes, the speculations and conclusions, the strange pretences and fantastical dreams, of those who have pursued it. To exhibit all these, or to give any account of them, would be impossible; and for our design, it would not be pertinent. To extract from the mass that which is to our purpose, is difficult; but the attempt must be made. We must endeavour to analyze the history of chemistry, so far as it has tended towards the establishment of general principles. We shall thus obtain a sight of generalisations of a new kind, and shall prepare ourselves for others of a higher order.

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BOOK XIV.

THE ANALYTICAL SCIENCE.

HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY.

. . . . . Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold . . . .
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple.

MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, i.

CHAPTER I.

Improvement of the Notion of Chemical Analysis, and Recognition of it as the Spagiric Art.

The doctrine of "the four elements" is one of the oldest monuments of man's speculative nature; goes back, perhaps, to times anterior to Greek philosophy; and, as the doctrine of Aristotle and Galen, reigned for fifteen hundred years over the Gentile, Christian, and Mohammedan world. In medicine, taught as the doctrine of the four "elementary qualities," of which the human body and all other substances are compounded, it had a very powerful and extensive influence upon medical practice. But this doctrine never led to any attempt actually to analyze bodies into their supposed elements; for composition was inferred from the resemblance of the qualities, not from the separate exhibition of the ingredients; the supposed analysis was, in short, a decomposition of the body into adjectives, not into substances.

This doctrine, therefore, may be considered as a negative state, antecedent to the very beginning of chemistry; and some progress beyond this mere negation was made, as soon as men began to endeavour to compound and decompound substances by the use of fire or mixture, however erroneous might be the opinions and expectations which they

combined with their attempts. Alchemy is a step in chemistry, so far as it implies the recognition of the work of the cupel and the retort, as the produce of analysis and synthesis. How perplexed and perverted were the forms in which this recognition was clothed,—how mixed up with mystical follies and extravagancies, we have already seen; and the share which alchemy had in the formation of any sounder knowledge, is not such as to justify any further notice of that pursuit.

The result of the attempts to analyze bodies by heat, mixture, and the like processes, was the doctrine that the first principles of things are *three*, not four; namely, *salt*, *sulphur*, and *mercury;* and that, of these three, all things are compounded. In reality, the doctrine, as thus stated, contained no truth which was of any value; for, though the chemist could extract from most bodies portions which he called salt, and sulphur, and mercury, these names were given, rather to save the hypothesis, than because the substances were really those usually so called: and thus the supposed analyses proved nothing, as Boyle justly urged against them[1].

The only real advance in chemical theory, therefore, which we can ascribe to the school of *the three principles*, as compared with those who held the ancient dogma of the four elements, is, the acknowledgment of the changes produced by the chemist's operations, as being changes which were to be accounted

[1] Shaw's Boyle. Sceptical Chymist, p. 312, 313, &c.

for by the union and separation of substantial elements, or, as they were sometimes called, of *hypostatical principles*. The workmen of this school acquired, no doubt, a considerable acquaintance with the results of the kinds of processes which they pursued; they applied their knowledge to the preparation of new medicines; and some of them, as Paracelsus and Van Helmont, attained, in this way, to great fame and distinction: but their merits, as regards theoretical chemistry, consist only in a truer conception of the problem, and of the mode of attempting its solution, than their predecessors had entertained.

This step is well marked by a word which, about the time of which we speak, was introduced to denote the chemist's employment. It was called the *Spagiric art*, (often misspelt Spagyric,) from two Greek words, (σπάω, ἀγείρω,) which mean, to separate parts, and to unite them. These two processes, or, in more modern language, analysis and synthesis, constitute the whole business of the chemist. We are not making a fanciful arrangement, therefore, when we mark the recognition of this object as a step in the progress of chemistry. I now proceed to consider the manner in which the conditions of this analysis and synthesis were further developed.

CHAPTER II.

Doctrine of Acid and Alkali.—Sylvius.

Among the results of mixture observed by chemists, were many instances in which two ingredients, each in itself pungent or destructive, being put together, became mild and inoperative; each counteracting and neutralizing the activity of the other. The notion of such opposition and neutrality is applicable to a very wide range of chemical processes. The person who appears first to have steadily seized and generally applied this notion is Francis de la Boé Sylvius; who was born in 1614, and practised medicine at Amsterdam, with a success and reputation which gave great currency to his opinions on that art[1]. His chemical theories were propounded as subordinate to his medical doctrines; and from being thus presented under a most important practical aspect, excited far more attention than mere theoretical opinions on the composition of bodies could have done. Sylvius is spoken of by historians of science, as the founder of the *iatro-chemical* sect among physicians; that is, the sect which considers the disorders in the human frame as the effects of chemical relations of the fluids, and applies to them

[1] Sprengel. Geschichte der Arzneykunde, vol. iv. Thomson's History of Chemistry in the corresponding part is translated from Sprengel.

modes of cure founded upon this doctrine. We have here to speak, not of his physiological, but of his chemical, views.

The distinction of *acid* and *alkaline* bodies (*acidum*, *lixivum*) was familiar before the time of Sylvius; but he framed a system, by considering them both as eminently acrid and yet opposite, and by applying this notion to the human frame. Thus[2] the lymph contains an acid, the bile an alkaline salt. These two opposite acrid substances, when they are brought together, *neutralize* each other (*infringunt*), and are changed into an intermediate and milder substance.

The progress of this doctrine, as a physiological one, is an important part of the history of medical science in the seventeenth century; but with that we are not here concerned. But as a chemical doctrine, this notion of the opposition of acid and alkali, and of its very general applicability, struck deep root, and has not been eradicated up to our own time. Boyle, indeed, whose disposition led him to suspect all generalities, expressed doubts with respect to this view[3]; and argued that the supposition of acid and alkaline parts in all bodies was precarious, their offices arbitrary, and the notion of them unsettled. Indeed it was not difficult to show, that there was no one certain criterion to which all supposed acids conformed. Yet the general conception of such a combination as that of

[2] De Methodo Medendi, Amst. 1679. Lib. ii. cap. 28, sects. 8 and 53.

[3] Shaw's Boyle, iii. p. 432.

acid and alkali was supposed to be, served so well to express many chemical facts, that it kept its ground. It is found, for instance, in Lemery's Chemistry, which was one of those in most general use before the introduction of the phlogistic theory. In this work (which was translated into English by Keill, in 1698) we find alkalies defined by their effervescing with acids[4]. They were distinguished as the *mineral* alkali (soda), the *vegetable* alkali (potassa), and the *volatile* alkali (ammonia). Again, in Macquer's Chemistry, which was long the text-book in Europe during the reign of phlogiston, we find acids and alkalies, and their union, in which they rob each other of their characteristic properties, and form neutral salts, stated among the leading principles of the science[5].

In truth, the mutual relation of acids to alkalies was the most essential part of the knowledge which chemists possessed concerning them. The importance of this relation arose from its being the first distinct form in which the notion of chemical attraction or affinity appeared. For the acrid or caustic character of acids and alkalies is, in fact, a tendency to alter the bodies they touch, and thus to alter themselves; and the neutral character of the compounds is the absence of any such proclivity to change. Acids and alkalies have a strong disposition to unite. They combine, often with vehemence, and produce neutral salts; they exhibit, in short, a pro-

[4] Lemery, p. 25. [5] Macquer, p. 19.

minent example of the chemical attraction, or affinity, by which two ingredients are formed into a compound. The relation of *acid* and *base* in a salt is, to this day, one of the main grounds of all theoretical reasonings.

The more distinct developement of the notion of such chemical attraction, gradually made its way among the chemists of the latter part of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, as we may see in the writings of Boyle, Newton, and their followers. Beccher speaks of this attraction as a *magnetism;* but I do not know that any writer in particular, can be pointed out as the person who firmly established the general notion of *chemical attraction.*

But this idea of chemical attraction became both more clear and more extensively applicable, when it assumed the form of the doctrine of *elective* attractions, in which shape we must now speak of it.

CHAPTER III.

Doctrine of Elective Attractions. Geoffroy. Bergman.

Though the chemical combinations of bodies had already been referred to attraction, in a vague and general manner, it was impossible to explain the changes that take place, without supposing the attraction to be greater or less, according to the nature of the body. Yet it was some time before the necessity of such a supposition was clearly seen. In the history of the French Academy for 1718 (published 1719), the writer of the introductory notice, (probably Fontenelle,) says, "That a body which is united to another, for example, a solvent which has penetrated a metal, should quit it to go and unite itself with another which we present to it, is a thing of which the possibility had never been guessed by the most subtle philosophers, and of which the explanation even now is not easy." The doctrine had, in fact, been stated by Stahl, but the assertion just quoted shows, at least, that it was not familiar. The principle, however, is very clearly stated[1] in a memoir in the same volume, by Geoffroy, a French physician of great talents and varied knowledge. "We observe in chemistry," he says, "certain relations amongst different bodies, which cause them to unite. These relations have their *degrees*

[1] A. P. 1718, p. 202.

and their *laws*. We observe their different degrees in this;—that among different matters jumbled together, which have a certain disposition to unite, we find that one of these substance always unites constantly with a certain other, preferably to all the rest." He then states that those which unite by preference, have "plus de rapport," or, according to a phrase afterwards used, more *affinity*. "And I have satisfied myself," he adds, "that we may deduce, from these observations, the following proposition, which is very extensively true, though I cannot enunciate it as universal, not having been able to examine all the possible combinations, to assure myself that I should find no exception." The proposition which he states in this admirable spirit of philosophical caution, is this: "In all cases where two substances, which have any disposition to combine, are united; if there approaches them a third, which has more affinity with one of the two, this one unites with the third and lets go the other." He then states these affinities in the form of a Table; placing a substance at the head of each column, and other substances in succession below it, according to the order of their affinities for the substance which stands at the head. He allows that the separation is not always complete, (an imperfection which he ascribes to the glutinosity of fluids and other causes,) but, with such exceptions, he defends very resolutely and successfully his Table, and the notions which it implies.

The value of such a tabulation was immense at the

time, and is even still very great; it enabled the chemists to trace beforehand the results of any operation; since, when the ingredients were given, he could see which were the strongest of the affinities brought into play, and, consequently, what compounds would be formed.[2] Geoffroy himself gave several good examples of this use of his table. It was speedily adopted into works on chemistry. For instance, Macquer[2] places it at the end of his book; "taking it," as he says, "to be of great use at the end of an elementary tract, as it collects into one point of view, the most essential and fundamental doctrines which are dispersed through the work."

The doctrine of *Elective Attractions*, as thus promulgated, contained so large a mass of truth, that it was never seriously shaken, though it required further developement and correction. In particular the celebrated work of Torbern Bergman, professor at Upsala, *On Elective Attractions*, published in 1775, introduced material improvements. Bergman observed, that not only the order of attractions, but the *sum* of those attractions which had to form the new compounds, must be taken account of, in order to judge of the result. Thus[3], if we have a combination of two elements, *P*, *s*, (potassa and vitriolic acid,) and another combination, *L*, *m*, (lime and muriatic acid,) though *s* has a greater affinity for *P* than for *L*, yet the sum of the attractions of *P* to *m*, and of *L* to *s*, is greater than that of the original

[2] Pref., p. 13. [3] Elect. Attract., p. 19.

compounds, and therefore the new compounds, *P*, *m*, and *L*, *s*, are formed.

The Table of Elective Attractions, modified by Bergman in pursuance of these views, and corrected according to the advanced knowledge of the time, became still more important than before. The next step was to take into account the quantities of the elements which combined; but this leads us into a new train of investigation, which was, indeed, a natural sequel to the researches of Geoffroy and Bergman.

In 1803, however, a chemist of great eminence, Berthollet, published a work, (*Essai de Statique Chimique*,) the tendency of which appeared to be to throw the subject back into the condition in which it had been before Geoffroy. For Berthollet maintained that the rules of chemical combination were not definite, and dependent on the nature of the substances alone, but indefinite, depending on the quantity present, and other circumstances. Proust answered him, and as Berzelius says[4], "Berthollet defended himself with an acuteness which makes the reader hesitate in his judgment; but the great mass of facts finally decided the point in favour of Proust." Before, however, we trace the result of these researches, we must consider chemistry as extending her inquiries to combustion as well as mixture, to airs as well as fluids and solids, and to weight as well as quality. These three steps we shall now briefly treat of.

[4] Chem., t. iii. p. 23.

CHAPTER IV.

Doctrine of Acidification and Combustion. Phlogistic Theory.

Publication of the Theory by Beccher and Stahl.— It will be recollected that we are tracing the history of the *progress* only of Chemistry, not of its errors;— that we are concerned with doctrines only so far as they are true, and have remained part of the received system of chemical truths. The Phlogistic Theory was deposed and succeeded by the Theory of Oxygen. But this circumstance must not lead us to overlook the really sound and permanent part of the opinions which the founders of the phlogistic theory taught. They brought together, as processes of the same kind, a number of changes which at first appeared to have nothing in common; as acidification, combustion, respiration. And the importance of this classification remains undiminished, whatever are the explanations which we adopt of the processes themselves.

The two chemists to whom are to be ascribed the merit of this step, and the establishment of the phlogistic theory which they connected with it, are John Joachim Beccher and George Ernest Stahl; the former of whom was professor at Mentz, and physician to the Elector of Bavaria (b. 1635, d. 1682), the latter was professor at Halle, and afterwards

royal physician at Berlin (b. 1660, d. 1734). These two men, who thus contributed to a common purpose, were very different from each other. The first was a frank and ardent enthusiast in the pursuit of chemistry, who speaks of himself and his employments with a communicativeness and affection, both amusing and engaging. The other was a teacher of great talents and influence, but accused of haughtiness and moroseness; a character which is well borne out by the manner in which, in his writings, he anticipates an unfavourable reception, and defies it. But it is right to add to this, that he speaks of Beccher, his predecessor, with an ungrudging acknowledgement of obligations to him, and a vehement assertion of his merit as the founder of the true system, which give a strong impression of Stahl's justice and magnanimity.

Beccher's opinions were at first promulgated rather as a correction than a refutation of the doctrine of the three principles, salt, sulphur, and mercury. The main peculiarity of his views consists in the offices which he ascribes to his sulphur, these being such as afterwards induced Stahl to give the name of Phlogiston to this element. Beccher had the sagacity to see that the reduction of metals to an earthy form (*calx*), and the formation of sulphuric acid from sulphur, are operations connected by a general analogy, as being alike processes of combustion. Hence the metal was supposed to consist of an earth, and of something which, in the process of combustion, was separated; and, in like manner,

sulphur was supposed to consist of the sulphuric acid, which remained after its combustion, and of the combustible part or true sulphur, which flew off in the burning. Beccher insists very distinctly upon this difference between his element sulphur and the sulphur of his Paracelsian predecessors.

It must be considered as indicating great knowledge and talent in Stahl, that he perceived so clearly what part of the views of Beccher was of general truth and permanent value. Though he[1] everywhere gives to Beccher the credit of the theoretical opinions which he promulgates, ("Beccheriana sunt quæ profero,") it seems certain that he had the merit, not only of proving them more completely, and applying them more widely than his forerunner, but also of conceiving them with a distinctness which Beccher did not attain. In 1697, appeared Stahl's *Zymotechnia Fundamentalis* (the Doctrine of Fermentation), "simulque *experimentum novum* sulphur verum arte producendi." In this work (besides other tenets which the author considered as very important), the opinion published by Beccher was now maintained in a very distinct form;—namely, that the process of forming sulphur from sulphuric acid, and of restoring the metals from their calces, are analogous, and consist alike in the addition of some combustible element, which Stahl termed *phlogiston* (φλογίστον, combustible). The experiment most insisted on in the work now spoken of[2], was

[1] Stahl, Præf. ad Specim. Becch. 1703. [2] P. 117.

the formation of sulphur from sulphate of potass (or of soda) by fusing the salt with an alkali, and throwing in coals to supply phlogiston. This is the "experimentum novum." Though Stahl published an account of this process, he seems almost to have regretted his openness. "He denies not," he says, "that he should peradventure have dissembled this experiment as the true foundation of the Beccherian assertion concerning the nature of sulphur, if he had not been provoked by the pretending arrogance of some of his contemporaries."

From this time, Stahl's confidence in his theory may be traced becoming more and more settled in his succeeding publications. It is hardly necessary to observe here, that the explanations which his theory gives are easily transformed into those which the more recent theory supplies. According to modern views, the addition of oxygen takes place in the formation of acids and of calces, and in combustion, instead of the subtraction of phlogiston. The coal which Stahl supposed to supply the combustible in his experiment, does in fact absorb the liberated oxygen. In like manner, when an acid corrodes a metal, and, according to the existing theory, oxidates it, Stahl supposed that the phlogiston of the metal combined with the acid. That the explanations of the phlogistic theory are so generally capable of being translated into the oxygen theory, merely by inverting the supposed transfer of the combustible element, shows us how important a

step towards the modern doctrines the phlogistic theory really was.

The question, whether these processes really were addition or subtraction, was decided by the balance, and belongs to a succeeding period of the science. But we may observe, that both Beccher and Stahl were aware of the increase of weight which metals undergo in calcination; although the time had not yet arrived in which this fact was to be made one of the bases of the theory.

It has been said[3], that in the adoption of the phlogistic theory, that is, in supposing the above-mentioned processes to be addition rather than subtraction, "of two possible roads the wrong was chosen, as if to prove the perversity of the human mind." But we must not forget how natural it was to suppose that some part of a body was *destroyed* or *removed* by combustion; and we may observe, that the merit of Beccher and Stahl did not consist in the selection of one road of two, but in advancing so far as to reach this point of separation. That, having done this, they went a little further on the wrong line, was an error which detracted little from the merit or value of the progress really made. It would be easy to show, from the writings of phlogistic chemists, what important and extensive truths their theory enabled them to express simply and clearly.

That an enthusiastic temper is favourable to the production of great discoveries in science, is a rule

[3] Herschel's Introd. to Nat. Phil. p. 300.

which suffers no exception in the character of Beccher. In his preface[4] addressed "to the benevolent reader" of his *Physica Subterranea*, he speaks of the chemists as a strange class of mortals, impelled by an almost insane impulse to seek their pleasure among smoke and vapour, soot and flame, poisons and poverty. "Yet among all these evils," he says, "I seem to myself to live so sweetly, that, may I die if I would change places with the Persian king!" He is, indeed, well worthy of admiration, as one of the first who pursued the labours of the furnace and the laboratory, without the bribe of golden hopes. "My kingdom," he says, "is not of this world. I trust that I have got hold of my pitcher by the right handle,—the true method of treating this study. For the *Pseudochymists* seek gold; but the *true philosophers*, science, which is more precious than any gold."

The Physica Subterranea made no converts. Stahl, in his indignant manner, says[5], "No one will wonder that it never yet obtained a physician or chemist as a disciple, still less as an advocate." And again, "This work obtained very little reputation or estimation, or, to speak ingenuously, as far as I know, none whatever." In 1671, Beccher published a supplement to his work, in which he showed how metals might be extracted from mud and sand. He offered to execute this at Vienna; but found that people there cared nothing about such novelties.

[4] Frankfort, 1681. [5] Præf. Phys. Sub. 1703.

He was then induced, by Baron D'Isola, to go to Holland for similar purposes. After various delays and quarrels, he was obliged to leave Holland for fear of his creditors; and then, I suppose, came to Great Britain, where he examined the Scottish and Cornish mines. He is said to have died in London in 1682.

Stahl's publications appear to have excited more notice, and led to controversy on the "so-called sulphur." The success of the experiment had been doubted, which, as he remarks, it was foolish to make a matter of discussion, when any one might decide the point by experiment; and finally, it had been questioned whether the substance obtained by this process were pure sulphur. The originality of his doctrine was also questioned, which, as he says, could not with any justice be impugned. He published in defence and development of his opinion at various intervals, as the *Specimen Beccherianum* in 1703, the *Documentum Theoriæ Beccherianæ*, a Dissertation *De Anatomia Sulphuris Artificialis;* and finally "Casual Thoughts on the so-called Sulphur," in 1718, in which he gave (in German) both an historical and a systematic view of his opinions on the nature of salts and of his Phlogiston.

Reception and Application of the Theory.—The theory that the formation of sulphuric acid, and the restoration of metals from their calces, are analogous processes, and consist in the addition of *phlogiston*, was soon widely received; and the Phlogistic School was thus established. From Berlin, its ori-

ginal seat, it was diffused into all parts of Europe. The general reception of the theory may be traced, not only in the use of the term "phlogiston," and of the explanations which it implies; but in the adoption of a nomenclature founded on those explanations, which, though not very extensive, is sufficient evidence of the prevalence of the theory. Thus when Priestley, in 1774, discovered oxygen, and when Scheele, a little later, discovered chlorine, these gases were termed *dephlogisticated air*, and *dephlogistigated marine acid*; while azotic acid gas, having no disposition to combustion, was supposed to be saturated with phlogiston, and was called *phlogisticated air*.

This phraseology kept its ground, till it was expelled by the antiphlogistic, or oxygen theory. For instance, Cavendish's papers on the chemistry of the airs are expressed in terms of it, although his researches led him to the confines of the new theory. We must now give an account of such researches, and of the consequent revolution in the science.

CHAPTER V.

Chemistry of Gases.—Black. Cavendish.

The study of the properties of aëriform substances, or pneumatic chemistry, as it was called, occupied the chemists of the eighteenth century, and was the main occasion of the great advances which the science made at that period. The most material general truths which came into view in the course of these researches, were, that gases were to be numbered among the constituent elements of solid and fluid bodies; and that, in these, as in all other cases of composition, the compound was equal to the sum of its elements. The latter proposition, indeed, cannot be looked upon as a discovery, for it had been frequently acknowledged, though little applied; and, in fact, it could not be referred to with any advantage, till the aëriform elements, as well as others, were taken into the account. As soon as this was done, it produced a revolution in chemistry.

The credit of the first great step in pneumatic chemistry is, with justice, assigned to Dr. Black, afterwards professor at Edinburgh, but a young man of the age of twenty-four at the time when he made his discovery[1]. He found that the difference between caustic lime and common limestone arose from

[1] Thomson's Hist. Chem. i. 317.

this, that the latter substance consists of the former, combined with a certain air, which, being thus fixed in the solid body, he called *fixed air* (carbonic acid gas). He found, too, that magnesia, caustic potash, and caustic soda, would combine with the same air, with similar results. This discovery consisted, of course, in a new interpretation of observed changes. Alkalies appeared to be made caustic by contact with quicklime: at first Black imagined that they underwent this change by acquiring igneous matter from the quicklime; but when he perceived that the lime gained, not lost, in magnitude as it became mild, he rightly supposed that the alkalies were rendered caustic by imparting their air to the lime. This discovery was announced in Black's inaugural dissertation, in 1755, when he became professor of chemistry at Glasgow.

The chemistry of airs was pursued by other experimenters. The Honourable Henry Cavendish, about 1765, invented an apparatus, in which aërial fluids are confined by water, so that they can be managed and examined. This hydro-pneumatic apparatus, or, as it is sometimes called, *the pneumatic trough*, from that time was one of the most indispensable parts of the chemist's apparatus. Cavendish[2], in 1766, showed the identity of the properties of fixed air derived from various sources; and pointed out the peculiar qualities of *inflammable air*, (afterwards called hydrogen gas,) which, being nine times lighter than common air, soon attracted general notice by its employment

[2] Phil. Trans. 1766.

for raising balloons. The promise of discovery which this subject now offered, attracted the confident and busy mind of Priestley, whose *Experiments and Observations on different kinds of Air* appeared in 1774-79. In these volumes, he describes an extraordinary number of trials of various kinds; the results of which were, the discovery of new kinds of air, namely *phlogisticated air*, (azotic gas,) *nitrous air*, (nitrous gas,) and *dephlogisticated air*, (oxygen gas.)

But the discovery of new substances, though valuable in supplying chemistry with materials, was not so important as discoveries respecting their modes of composition. Among such discoveries, that of Cavendish, published in the Philosophical Transactions for 1784, and disclosing the composition of water by the union of two gases, oxygen and hydrogen, must be considered as holding a most distinguished place[2]. He states[3], that "his experiments were made principally with a view to find out the cause of the diminution which common air is well known to suffer, by all the various ways in which it is phlogisticated." And, after describing various unsuccessful attempts, he finds that when inflammable air is used in this phlogistication, (or burning,) the diminution of the common air is accompanied by the formation of a dew in the apparatus[4]. And thus he infers[5] that "almost all the inflammable air, and one-fifth of the common air, are turned into pure water."

[2] Phil. Trans. 1784, p. 119. [4] Ib. p. 128. [5] Ib. p. 129.

Lavoisier, to whose researches this result was, as we shall soon see, very important, was employed in a similar attempt at the same time, (1783,) and had already succeeded[6] when he learned from Blagden, the secretary of the Royal Society of London, who was present at the experiment, that Cavendish had made the discovery a few months sooner. Monge had, about the same time, made the same experiments, and communicated the result to Lavoisier and Laplace immediately afterwards. The synthesis was soon confirmed by a corresponding analysis. Indeed the discovery undoubtedly lay in the direct path of chemical research at the time. It was of great consequence in the view it gave of experiments in composition; for the small quantity of water produced in many such processes, had been quite overlooked; though, as it now appeared, this water offered the key to the whole interpretation of the change.

Though some objections to Mr. Cavendish's view were offered by Kirwan[7], on the whole they were generally received with assent and admiration. But the bearing of these discoveries upon the new theory of Lavoisier, who rejected phlogiston, was so close, that we cannot further trace the history of the subject without proceeding immediately to that theory.

[6] A. P. 1781, p. 472.

[7] P. T. 1784, p. 154.

CHAPTER VI.

EPOCH OF THE THEORY OF OXYGEN.—LAVOISIER.

Sect. 1.—*Prelude to the Theory.—Its Publication.*

WE arrive now at a great epoch in the history of chemistry. Few revolutions in science have immediately excited so much general notice as the introduction of the theory of oxygen. The simplicity and symmetry of the modes of combination which it assumed; and, above all, the construction and universal adoption of a nomenclature which applied to all substances, and which seemed to reveal their inmost constitution by their name, naturally gave it an almost irresistible sway over men's minds. We must, however, dispassionately trace the course of its introduction.

Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, an accomplished French chemist, had pursued, with zeal and skill, researches such as those of Black, Cavendish, and Priestley, which we have described above. In 1774, he showed that, in the calcinations of metals in air, the metal acquires as much weight as the air loses. It might appear that this discovery at once overturned the view which supposed the metal to be phlogiston *added* to the calx. Lavoisier's contemporaries were, however, far from allowing this; a greater mass of

argument was needed to bring them to this conclusion. Convincing proofs of the new opinion were, however, rapidly supplied. Thus, when Priestley had discovered dephlogisticated air, in 1774, Lavoisier showed, in 1775, that fixed air consisted of charcoal and the dephlogisticated or pure air; for the mercurial calx which, heated by itself, gives out pure air, gives out, when heated with charcoal, fixed air[1], which has, therefore, since been called *carbonic acid gas.*

Again, Lavoisier showed that the atmospheric air consists of pure or vital air, and of an *unvital* air, which he thence called *azot.* The vital air he found to be the agent in combustion, acidification, calcination, respiration; all these processes were analogous; all consisted in a decomposition of the atmospheric air, and a fixation of the pure or vital portion of it.

But he thus arrived at the conclusion, that this pure air was added, in all the cases in which, according to the received theory, *phlogiston* was subtracted, and *vice versâ.* He gave the name[2] of *oxygen* (*principe oxygène*) to "the substance which thus unites itself with metals to form their calces, and with combustible substances to form acids."

A new theory was thus produced, which would account for all the facts which the old one would explain, and had besides the evidence of the balance in its favour. But there still remained some apparent objections to be removed. In the action of dilute acids on metals, inflammable air was produced.

[1] A. P. 1775. [2] Ib. 1781, p. 448.

Whence came this element? The discovery of the decomposition of water sufficiently answered this question, and converted the objection into an argument on the side of the theory: and thus the decomposition of water was, in fact, one of the most critical events for the fortune of the Lavoisierian doctrine, and one which, more than any other, decided chemists in its favour. In succeeding years, Lavoisier showed the consistency of his theory with all that was discovered concerning the composition of alcohol, oil, animal and vegetable substances, and many other bodies.

It is not necessary for us to consider any further the evidence for this theory, but we must record a few circumstances respecting its earlier history. Rey, a French physician, had, in 1630, published a book, in which he inquires into the grounds of the increase of the weight of metals by calcination[a]. He says, "To this question, then, supported on the grounds already mentioned, I answer, and maintain with confidence, that the increase of weight arises from the air, which is condensed, rendered heavy and adhesive, by the heat of the furnace." Hooke and Mayow had entertained the opinion that the air contains a "nitrous spirit," which is the supporter of combustion. But Lavoisier disclaimed the charge of having derived anything from these sources; nor is it difficult to understand how the received generalisations of the phlogistic theory had thrown all such narrower explanations into obscurity. The merit of

[a] Thomson, ii. 95.

Lavoisier consisted in his combining the generality of Stahl with the verified conjectures of Rey and Mayow.

No one could have a better claim, by his early enthusiasm for science, his extensive knowledge, and his zealous labours, to hope that a great discovery might fall to his share, than Lavoisier. His father[4], a man of considerable fortune, had allowed him to make science his only profession; and the zealous philosopher collected about him a number of the most active physical inquirers of his time, who met and experimented at his house one day in the week. In this school, the new chemistry was gradually formed. A few years after the publication of Priestley's first experiments, Lavoisier was struck with the presentiment of the theory which he was afterwards to produce. In 1772, he deposited[5] with the secretary of the Academy, a note which contained the germ of his future doctrines. "At that time," he says, in explaining this step, "there was a kind of rivalry between France and England in science, which gave importance to new experiments, and which sometimes was the cause that the writers of the one or other of the nations disputed the discovery with the real author." In 1777, the editor of the Memoirs of the Academy speaks of his theory as overturning that of Stahl; but the general acceptance of the new opinion did not take place till later.

[4] Biogr. Univ. (Cuvier.)

[5] Thomson, ii. 99.

Sect. 2.—Reception and Confirmation of the Theory of Oxygen.

THE oxygen theory made its way with extraordinary rapidity among the best philosophers[6]. In 1785, that is, soon after Cavendish's synthesis of water had removed some of the most formidable objections to it, Berthollet, already an eminent chemist, declared himself a convert. Indeed it was soon so generally adopted in France, that Fourcroy promulgated its doctrines under the name of "La Chimie Française," a title which Lavoisier did not altogether relish. The extraordinary eloquence and success of Fourcroy as a lecturer at the Jardin des Plantes, had no small share in the diffusion of the oxygen theory; and the name of "the apostle of the new chemistry" which was at first given him in ridicule, was justly held by him to be a glorious distinction[7].

Guyton de Morveau, who had at first been a strenuous advocate of the phlogistic theory, was invited to Paris, and brought over to the opinions of Lavoisier; and soon joined in the formation of the nomenclature founded upon the theory. This step, of which we shall shortly speak, fixed the new doctrine, and diffused it further. Delametherie alone defended the phlogistic theory with vigour, and indeed with violence. He was the editor of the "Journal de Physique," and to evade the influence

[6] Thomson, ii. 130.

[7] Cuvier, Eloges, i. p. 20.

which this gave him, the antiphlogistians[8] established, as the vehicle of their opinions, another periodical, the "Annales de Chimie."

In England, indeed, their success was not so immediate. Cavendish[9], in his Memoir of 1784, speaks of the question between the two opinions as doubtful. "There are," he says, "several Memoirs of M. Lavoisier, in which he entirely discards phlogiston; and as not only the foregoing experiments, but most other phenomena of nature, seem explicable as well, or nearly as well, upon this as upon the commonly believed principle of phlogiston," Cavendish proceeds to explain his experiments according to the new views, expressing no decided preference, however, for either system. Kirwan, however, another English chemist, contested the point much more resolutely. His theory identified inflammable air, or hydrogen, with phlogiston; and in this view, he wrote a work which was intended as a confutation of the essential part of the oxygen theory. It is a strong proof of the steadiness and clearness with which the advocates of the new system possessed their principles, that they immediately translated this work, adding, at the end of each chapter, a refutation of the phlogistic doctrines which it contained. Lavoisier, Berthollet, De Morveau, Fourcroy, and Monge, were the authors of this curious specimen of scientific polemics. It is also

[8] Thomson, ii. 133. [9] P. T. 1784, p. 150.

remarkable evidence of the candour of Kirwan, that notwithstanding the prominent part he had taken in the controversy, he allowed himself at last to be convinced. After a struggle of ten years, he wrote[10] to Berthollet in 1796, "I lay down my arms, and abandon the cause of phlogiston." Black followed the same course. Priestley alone, of all the chemists of great name, would never assent to the new doctrines, though his own discoveries had contributed so much to their establishment. "He saw," says Cuvier[11], "without flinching, the most skilful defenders of the ancient theory go over to the enemy in succession; and when Kirwan had, almost the last of all, abjured phlogiston, Priestley remained alone on the field of battle, and threw out a new challenge, in a memoir addressed to the principal French chemists." It happened, curiously enough, that the challenge was accepted, and the arguments answered by M. Adet, who was at that time (1798,) the French ambassador to the United States, in which country Priestley's work was published. Even in Germany, the birth-place and home of the phlogistic theory, the struggle was not long protracted. There was, indeed, a controversy, the older philosophers being, as usual, the defenders of the established doctrines; but in 1792, Klaproth repeated, before the Academy of Berlin, all the fundamental experiments; and "the result was a full conviction

[10] Pref. to Fourcroy's Chemistry, xiv.
[11] Cuvier, Eloge de Priestley, p. 208.

on the part of Klaproth and the Academy, that the Lavoisierian theory was the true one[12]. Upon the whole, the introduction of the Lavoisierian theory in the scientific world, when compared with the great revolution of opinion to which it comes nearest in importance, the introduction of the Newtonian theory, shows, by the rapidity and temper with which it took place, a great improvement, both in the means of arriving at truth, and in the spirit with which they were used.

Some English writers[13] have expressed an opinion, that there was little that was original in the new doctrines. But if they were so obvious, what are we to say of eminent chemists, as Black and Cavendish, who hesitated when they were presented, or Kirwan and Priestley, who rejected them? This at least shows that it required some peculiar insight to see the evidence of these truths. To say that most of the materials of Lavoisier's theory existed before him, is only to say that his great merit was, that which must always be the great merit of a new theory, his generalisation. The effect which the publication of his doctrines produced, shows us that he was the first person who, possessing clearly the idea of quantitative composition, applied it steadily to a great range of well-ascertained *facts*. This is, as we have often had to observe, precisely the universal description of an inductive discoverer.

[12] Thomson, vol. ii. p. 136.

[13] Brande, Hist. Diss. in Enc. Brit. p. 182. Lunn, Chem. in Enc. Met. p. 596.

It has been objected, in like manner, to the originality of Newton's discoveries, that they were contained in those of Kepler. They were so, but they needed a Newton to find them there. The originality of the theory of oxygen is proved by the conflict, short as it was, which accompanied its promulgation; its importance is shown by the changes which it soon occasioned in every part of the science. Thus Lavoisier, far more fortunate than most of those who had, in earlier ages, produced revolutions in science, saw his theory accepted by all the most eminent men of his time, and established over a great part of Europe within a few years from its first promulgation. In the common course of events, it might have been expected that the later years of his life would have been spent amid the admiration and reverence which naturally wait upon the patriarch of a new system of acknowledged truths. But the times in which he lived allowed no such euthanasia to eminence of any kind. The democracy which overthrew the ancient political institutions of France, and swept away the nobles of the land, was not, as might have been expected, enthusiastic in its admiration of a great revolution in science, and forward to offer its homage to the genuine nobility of a great discoverer. Lavoisier was thrown into prison on some wretched charge of having, in the discharge of a public office which he held, adulterated certain tobacco; but in reality, for the purpose of confiscating his property[14]. In his imprisonment, his phi-

[14] Biog. Univ. (Cuvier.)

losophy was his resource; and he employed himself in the preparation of his papers for printing. When he was brought before the revolutionary tribunal, he begged for a respite of a few days, in order to complete some researches, the results of which were, he said, important to the good of humanity. The brutish idiot whom the state of the country at that time had placed in the judgment-seat, told him that the republic wanted no sçavans. He was dragged to the guillotine, May the 8th, 1794, and beheaded, in the fifty-second year of his age; a melancholy proof that, in periods of political ferocity, innocence and merit, private virtues and public services, amiable manners and the love of friends, literary fame and exalted genius, are all as nothing, to protect their possessor from the last extremes of violence and wrong, inflicted under judicial forms.

Sect. 3.—*Nomenclature of the Oxygen Theory.*

As we have already said, a powerful instrument in establishing and diffusing the new chemical theory, was a systematic nomenclature founded upon it, and applicable to all chemical compounds, which was soon constructed and published by the authors of the theory. Such a nomenclature made its way into general use the more easily, in that the want of such a system had already been severely felt; the names in common use being fantastical, arbitrary, and multiplied beyond measure. The number of known substances had become so great, that a list of names with no

regulative principles, founded on accident, caprice and error, was too cumbrous and inconvenient to be tolerated. Even before the currency which Lavoisier's theory obtained, these evils had led to attempts towards a more convenient set of names. Bergman and Black had constructed such lists; and Guyton de Morveau, a clever and accomplished lawyer of Dijon, had formed a system of nomenclature in 1782, before he had become a convert to Lavoisier's theory, in which task he had been exhorted and encouraged by Bergman and Macquer. In this system[18], we do not find most of the characters of the method which was afterwards adopted. But a few years later, Lavoisier, De Morveau, Berthollet and Fourcroy, associated themselves for the purpose of producing a nomenclature which should correspond to the new theoretical views. This appeared in 1787, and soon made its way into general use. The main features of this system are, a selection of the simplest radical words, by which substances are designated, and a systematic distribution of terminations, to express their relations. Thus, sulphur, combined with oxygen in two different proportions, forms two acids, the sulphur*ous* and the sulphur*ic*; and these acids form, with earthy or alkaline bases, sulph*ites* and sulph*ates*; while sulphur directly combined with another element, forms a sulph*uret*. The term *oxyd* (now usually written *oxide*,) expressed a lower degree of combination with oxygen than the acids. The

[18] Journal de Physique, 1782, p. 370.

"Méthode de Nomenclature Chimique" was published in 1787; and in 1789, Lavoisier published a treatise on chemistry in order further to explain this method. In the preface to this volume, he apologises for the great amount of the changes, and pleads the authority of Bergman, who had exhorted Morveau "to spare no improper names; those who are learned will always be learned, and those who are ignorant will thus learn sooner." To this maxim they so far conformed, that their system offers few anomalies; and though the progress of discovery, and the consequent changes of theoretical opinions, which have since gone on, appear now to require a further change of nomenclature; it is no small evidence of the skill with which this scheme was arranged, that for half a century it was universally used, and felt to be far more useful and effective than any nomenclature in any science had ever been before.

CHAPTER VII.

Application and Correction of the Oxygen Theory.

Since a chemical theory, as far as it is true, must enable us to obtain a true view of the intimate composition of all bodies whatever, it will readily be supposed that the new chemistry led to an immense number of analyses and researches of various kinds. These it is not necessary to dwell upon; nor will I even mention the names of any of the intelligent and diligent men who have laboured in this field. Perhaps one of the most striking of such analyses was Davy's decomposition of the earths and alkalies into metallic bases and oxygen, in 1807 and 1808; thus extending still further that analogy between the earths and the calces of the metals, which had had so large a share in the formation of chemical theories. This discovery, however, both in the means by which it was made, and in the views to which it led, bears upon subjects hereafter to be treated of.

The Lavoisierian theory also, wide as was the range of truth which it embraced, required some limitation and correction. I do not now speak of some erroneous opinions entertained by the author of the theory; as, for instance, that the heat produced in combustion, and even in respiration, arose from the conversion of the oxygen gas to a solid consist-

ence, according to the doctrine of latent heat. Such opinions not being necessarily connected with the general idea of the theory, need not here be considered. But the leading generalisation of Lavoisier, that acidification was *always* combination with oxygen, was found untenable. The point on which the contest on this subject took place was the constitution of the *oxymuriatic* and *muriatic* acids;—as they had been termed by Berthollet, from the belief that muriatic acid contained oxygen, and oxymuriatic a still larger dose. In opposition to this, a new doctrine was put forwards in 1809 by Gay-Lussac and Thenard in France, and by Davy in England;—namely, that oxymuriatic acid was a simple substance, which they termed *chlorine,* and that muriatic acid was a combination of chlorine with hydrogen, which therefore was called *hydrochloric acid.* It may be observed, that the point in dispute in the controversy on this subject was nearly the same which had been debated in the course of the establishment of the oxygen theory; namely, whether, in the formation of muriatic acid from chlorine, oxygen is subtracted, or hydrogen added, and the water concealed.

In the course of this dispute, it was allowed on both sides, that the combination of dry muriatic acid and ammonia afforded an *experimentum crucis;* since, if water was produced from these elements, oxygen must have existed in the acid. Davy being at Edinburgh in 1812, this experiment was made in the presence of several eminent philosophers; and the

result was found to be, that though a slight dew appeared in the vessel, there was not more than might be ascribed to unavoidable imperfection in the process, and certainly not so much as the old theory of muriatic acid required. The new theory, after this period, obtained a clear superiority in the minds of philosophical chemists, and was further supported by new analogies[1].

For, the existence of one hydracid being thus established, it was found that other substances gave similar combinations; and thus chemists obtained the *hydriodic*, *hydrofluoric*, and *hydrobromic* acids. These acids, it is to be observed, form salts with bases, in the same manner as the oxygen acids do. The analogy of the muriatic and fluoric compounds was first clearly urged by a philosopher who was not peculiarly engaged in chemical research, but who was often distinguished by his rapid and happy generalisations, M. Ampère. He supported this analogy by many ingenious and original arguments, in letters written to Davy, while that chemist was engaged in his researches on fluor spar, as Davy himself declares[2].

Still further changes have been proposed, in that classification of elementary substances to which the oxygen theory led. It has been held by Berzelius and others, that other elements, as, for example, sulphur, form *salts* with the alkaline and earthy metals, rather than sulphurets. The character of these *sulpho-salts*, however, is still questioned among

[1] Paris, Life of Davy, i. 337. [2] Ib. i. 370.

chemists; and therefore it does not become us to speak as if their place in history were settled. Of course, it will easily be understood that, in the same manner in which the oxygen theory introduced its own proper nomenclature, the overthrow or material transformation of the theory would require a change in the nomenclature; or rather, the anomalies which tended to disturb the theory, would, as they were detected, make the theoretical terms be felt as inappropriate, and would suggest the necessity of a reformation in that respect. But the discussion of this point belongs to a step of the science which is to come before us hereafter.

It may be observed, that in approaching the limits of this part of our subject, as we are now doing, the doctrine of the combination of *acids* and *bases*, of which we formerly traced the rise and progress, is still assumed as a fundamental relation by which other relations are tested. This remark connects the stage of chemistry now under our notice with its earliest steps. But in order to point out the chemical bearing of the next subjects of our narrative, we may further observe, that *metals*, *earths*, *salts*, are spoken of as known classes of substances; and in like manner the newly discovered elements, which form the last trophies of chemistry, have been distributed into such classes according to their analogies; thus *potassium*, *sodium*, *barium*, have been asserted to be metals; *iodine*, *bromine*, *fluorine*, have been arranged as analogical to *chlorine*. Yet there is something vague and indefinite in the boundaries of such classi-

fications and analogies; and it is precisely where this vagueness falls, that the science is still obscure or doubtful. We are led, therefore, to see the dependence of chemistry upon classification; and it is to sciences of classification which we shall next proceed; as soon as we have noticed the most general views which have been given of chemical relations, namely, those of the electro-chemists.

But before we do this, we must look back upon a law which obtains in the combination of elements, and which we have hitherto not stated; although it appears, more than any other, to reveal to us the intimate constitution of bodies, and to offer a basis for future generalisations. I speak of the *atomic theory*, as it is usually termed; or, as we might rather call it, the doctrine of definite, reciprocal, and multiple proportions.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEORY OF DEFINITE, RECIPROCAL, AND MULTIPLE PROPORTIONS.

Sect. 1.—*Prelude to the Atomic Theory, and its Publication by Dalton.*

THE general laws of chemical combination announced by Mr. Dalton are truths of the highest importance in the science, and are now nowhere contested; but the view of matter as constituted of *atoms*, which he has employed in conveying those laws, and in expressing his opinion of their cause, is neither so important nor so certain. In the place which I here assign to his discovery, as one of the great events of the history of chemistry, I speak only of the *law of phenomena*, the rules which govern the quantities in which elements combine.

This law may be considered as consisting of three parts, according to the above description of it;—that elements combine in *definite* proportions;—that these determining proportions operate *reciprocally*;—and that when, between the same elements, several combining proportions occur, they are related as *multiples*.

That elements combine in certain definite proportions of quantity, and in no other, was implied, as

soon as it was supposed that chemical compounds had any definite properties. Those who first attempted to establish regular formulæ[1] for the constitution of salts, minerals, and other compounds, assumed, by this process, that the elements in different specimens had the same proportion. Wenzel, in 1777, published his *Lehre von der Verwandschaft der Körper*; or, Doctrine of the Affinities of Bodies; in which he gave many good and accurate analyses. His work, it is said, never grew into general notice. Berthollet, as we have already stated, maintained that chemical compounds were not definite; but this controversy took place at a later period. It ended in the establishment of the doctrine, that there is, for each combination, only one proportion of the elements, or at most only two or three.

Not only did Wenzel, by his very attempt, presume the first law of chemical composition, the definiteness of the proportions, but he was also led, by his results, to the second rule, that they are reciprocal. For he found that when two neutral salts decompose each other, the resulting salts are also neutral. The neutral character of the salts shows that they are definite compounds; and when the two elements of the one salt, P and s, are presented to those of the other, B and n, if P be in such quantity as to combine definitely with n, B will also combine definitely with s.

Views similar to those of Wenzel were also published by Jeremiah Benjamin Richter[2] in 1792, in his

[1] Thomson, Hist. Chem. vol. ii. p. 279. [2] Ib. p. 283.

Aufangsgründe der Stöchyometrie, oder Messkunst Chymischer Elemente, (Principles of the Measure of Chemical Elements,) in which he took the law, just stated, of reciprocal proportions, as the basis of his researches, and determined the numerical quantities of the common bases and acids which would saturate each other. It is clear that, by these steps, the two first of our three rules may be considered as fully developed. The change of general views which was at this time going on, probably prevented chemists from feeling so much interest as they might have done otherwise, in these details; the French and English chemists, in particular, were fully employed with their own researches and controversies.

Thus the rules which had already been published by Wenzel and Richter had attracted so little notice, that we can hardly consider Mr. Dalton as having been anticipated by those writers, when, in 1803, he began to communicate his views on the chemical constitution of bodies; these views being such as to include both these two rules in their most general form, and further, the rule, at that time still more new to chemists, of *multiple* proportions. He conceived bodies as composed of atoms of their constituent elements, grouped, either one and one, or one and two, or one and three, and so on. Thus, if *c* represent an atom of carbon and *o* one of oxygen, *o c* will be an atom of *carbonic oxide*, and *o c o* an atom of *carbonic acid;* and hence it follows, that while both these bodies have a definite quantity of oxygen to a given quan-

tity of carbon, in the latter substance this quantity is *double* of what it is in the former.

The consideration of bodies as consisting of compound atoms, these being composed of elementary ones, naturally led to this law of multiple proportions. In this mode of viewing bodies, Mr. Dalton had been preceded (unknown to himself) by Mr. Higgins, who, in 1789, published[3] his *Comparative View of the Phlogistic and Antiphlogistic Theories.* He there says[4], "That in volatile vitriolic acid, a single ultimate particle of sulphur is united only to a single particle of dephlogisticated air; and that in perfect vitriolic acid, every single particle of sulphur is united to two of dephlogisticated air, being the quantity necessary to saturation;" and he reasons in the same manner concerning the constitution of water, and the compounds of nitrogen and oxygen. These observations of Higgins were, however, made casually, and not followed out, and cannot affect Dalton's claim to original merit.

Mr. Dalton's generalisation was first suggested[5] during his examination of olefiant gas and carburetted hydrogen gas; and was asserted generally, on the strength of a few facts, being, as it were, irresistibly recommended by the clearness and simplicity which the notion possessed. Mr. Dalton himself represented the compound atoms of bodies by symbols which professed to exhibit the arrangement of the

[3] Turner's Chem. p. 217. [4] P. 36 and 37.
[5] Thomson, vol. ii. p. 291.

elementary atoms; and he attached great importance to this part of his scheme. It is clear, however, that this part is not essential to that numerical comparison of the law with facts, on which its establishment rests. These hypothetical configurations of atoms have no value till they are confirmed by corresponding facts, such as the optical or crystalline properties of bodies may perhaps one day furnish.

Sect. 2.—*Reception and Confirmation of the Atomic Theory.*

In order to give a sketch of the progress of the Atomic Theory into general reception, we cannot do better than borrow our information mainly from Dr. Thomson, who was one of the earliest converts and most effective promulgators of the doctrine. Mr. Dalton, at the time when he conceived his theory, was a teacher of mathematics at Manchester, in circumstances which might have been considered narrow, if he himself had been less simple in his manner of life, and less moderate in his worldly views. His experiments were generally made with apparatus of which the simplicity and cheapness corresponded to the rest of his habits. In 1804, he was already in possession of his atomic theory, and explained it to Dr. Thomson, who visited him at that time. It was made known to the chemical world in Dr. Thomson's *Chemistry*, in 1807; and in Dalton's own *System of Chemistry* (1808) the leading ideas of it were very briefly stated. Dr. Wollaston's memoir, "on super-

acid and subacid salts," which appeared in the Philosophical Transactions for 1808, did much to secure this theory a place in the estimation of chemists. Here the author states, that he had observed, in various salts, the quantities of acid combined with the base in the neutral and in the superacid salts to be as one to two: and he says that, thinking it likely this law might obtain generally in such compounds, it was his design to have pursued the subject, with the hope of discovering the cause to which so regular a relation may be ascribed. But he adds, that this appears to be superfluous after the publication of Dalton's theory by Dr. Thomson, since all such facts are but special cases of the general law. We cannot but remark here, that the scrupulous timidity of Wollaston was probably the only impediment to his anticipating Dalton in the publication of the rule of multiple proportions; and the forwardness to generalise, which belongs to the character of the latter, justly secured him, in this instance, the name of the discoverer of this law. The rest of the English chemists soon followed Wollaston and Thomson, though Davy for some time resisted. They objected, indeed, to Dalton's assumption of atoms; and, to avoid this hypothetical step, Wollaston used the phrase *chemical equivalents*, and Davy the word *proportions*, for the numbers which expressed Dalton's atomic weights. We may, however, venture to say that the term "atom" is the most convenient, and it need not be understood as claiming our assent to the hypothesis of indivisible molecules.

As Wollaston and Dalton were thus arriving independently at the same result in England, other chemists, in other countries, were, unknown to each other, travelling towards the same point.

In 1807, Berzelius[6], intending to publish a system of chemistry, went through several works little read, and among others the treatises of Richter. He was astonished, he tells us, at the light which was there thrown upon composition and decomposition, and which had never been turned to profit. He was led to a long train of experimental research, and, when he received information of Dalton's ideas concerning multiple proportions, he found, in his own collection of analyses, a full confirmation of this theory.

Some of the Germans, indeed, appear discontented with the partition of reputation which has taken place with respect to the Theory of Definite Proportions. One[7] of them says, "Dalton has only done this;—he has wrapt up the good Richter (whom he knew; compare Schweigger. T., older series, vol. x., p. 381;) in a ragged suit, patched together of atoms; and now poor Richter comes back to his own country in such a garb, like Ulysses, and is not recognized." It is to be recollected, however, that Richter says nothing of multiple proportions.

The general doctrine of the atomic theory is now firmly established over the whole of the chemical world. There remain still several controverted points, as, for instance, whether the atomic weights of all elements are exact multiples of the atomic

[6] Berz. Chem. b. iii. p. 27. [7] Marx. Gesch. der Cryst. p. 202.

weight of hydrogen. Dr. Prout advanced several instances in which this appeared to be true, and Dr. Thomson has asserted the law to be of universal application. But, on the other hand, Berzelius and Dr. Turner declare that this hypothesis is at variance with the results of the best analyses. Such controverted points do not belong to our history, which treats only of the progress of scientific truths already recognised by all competent judges.

Though Dalton's discovery was soon generally employed, and universally spoken of with admiration, it did not bring to him anything but barren praise, and he continued in the humble employment of which we have spoken, when his fame had filled Europe, and his name become a household word in the laboratory. After some years he was appointed a corresponding member of the Institute of France; which may be considered as a European recognition of the importance of what he had done; and, in 1826, two medals for the encouragement of science having been placed at the disposal of the Royal Society by the king of England, one of them was assigned to Dalton, "for his developement of the atomic theory." In 1833, at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which was held in Cambridge, it was announced that the king had bestowed upon him a pension of 150*l.*; at the preceding meeting at Oxford, that university had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, a step the more remarkable, since he belonged to the sect of Quakers. At

all the meetings of the British Association he has been present, and has always been surrounded by the reverence and admiration of all who feel any sympathy with the progress of science. May he long remain among us thus to remind us of the vast advance which chemistry owes to him!

Sect. 3.—*The Theory of Volumes.—Gay-Lussac.*

THE atomic theory, at the very epoch of its introduction into France, received a modification in virtue of a curious discovery then made. Soon after the publication of Dalton's system, Gay-Lussac and Humboldt found a rule for the combination of substances, which includes that of Dalton as far as it goes, but extends to combinations of gases only. This law is the *theory of volumes*; namely, that gases unite together *by volume* in very simple and definite proportions. Thus water is composed exactly of 100 measures of oxygen and 200 measures of hydrogen. And since these simple ratios 1 and 1, 1 and 2, 1 and 3, alone prevail in such combinations, it may easily be shown that laws like Dalton's law of multiple proportions, must obtain in such cases as he considered.

I cannot now attempt to trace other bearings and developements of this remarkable discovery. I hasten on to the last generalisation of chemistry; which presents to us chemical forces under a new aspect, and brings us back to the point from which we departed in commencing the history of this science.

CHAPTER IX.

Epoch of Davy and Faraday.

Sect. 1.—*Promulgation of the Electro-chemical Theory by Davy.*

The reader will recollect that the history of chemistry, though highly important and instructive in itself, has been an interruption (p. 98) of the history of electro-dynamic research:—a necessary interruption, however; for till we became acquainted with chemistry in general, we could not follow the facts of electro-chemistry: we could not estimate its vast yet philosophical theories, nor even express its simplest facts. We have now to endeavour to show what has thus been done, and by what steps;—to give a fitting view of the Epoch of Davy and Faraday.

This is, doubtless, a task of difficulty and delicacy. We cannot execute it at all, except we suppose that the great truths, of which the discovery marks this epoch, have already assumed their definite and permanent form. For we do not learn the just value and right place of imperfect attempts and partial advances in science, except by seeing to what they lead. We judge properly of our trials and guesses only when we have gained our point and guessed

rightly. We might personify philosophical theories, and might represent them to ourselves as figures, all pressing eagerly onwards in the same direction, whom we have to pursue: and it is only in proportion as we ourselves overtake those figures in the race, and pass beyond them, that we are enabled to look back upon their faces; to discern their real aspects, and to catch the true character of their countenances. Except, therefore, I were of opinion that the great truths which Davy brought into sight have been firmly established and clearly developed by Faraday, I could not pretend to give the history of this striking portion of science. But I trust, by the view I have to offer of these beautiful trains of research and their result, to justify the assumption on which I thus proceed.

I must, however, state, as a further appeal to the reader's indulgence, that, even if the great principles of electro-chemistry have now been brought out in their due form and extent, the discovery is but a very few years, I might rather say a few months, old; and that this novelty adds materially to the difficulty of estimating previous attempts from the point of view to which we are thus led. It is only slowly and by degrees that the mind becomes sufficiently imbued with those new truths, of which the office is, to change the face of a science. We have to consider familiar appearances under a new aspect; to refer old facts to new principles; and it is not till after some time, that the struggle and hesitation which this employment occasions, subsides into a tranquil

equilibrium. In the newly-acquired provinces of man's intellectual empire, the din and confusion of conquest, pass gradually only into quiet and security. We have seen, in the history of all capital discoveries, how hardly they have made their way, even among the most intelligent and candid philosophers of the antecedent schools: we must, therefore, not expect that the metamorphosis of the theoretical views of chemistry which is now going on, will be effected without some trouble and delay.

I shall endeavour to diminish the difficulties of my undertaking, by presenting the earlier investigations in the department of which I have now to speak, as much as possible according to the most deliberate view taken of them by the great discoverers themselves, Davy and Faraday; since these philosophers are they who have taught us the true import of such investigations.

There is a further difficulty in my task, to which I might refer;—the difficulty of speaking, without error and without offence, of men now alive, or who were lately members of social circles which exist still around us. But the scientific history in which such persons play a part, is so important to my purpose, that I do not hesitate to incur the responsibility which the narration involves; and I have endeavoured, earnestly, and I hope not in vain, to speak as if I were removed by centuries from the personages of my story.

The phenomena observed in the voltaic apparatus were naturally the subject of many speculations as

to their cause, and thus gave rise to "Theories of the Pile." Among these phenomena there was one class which led to most important results: it was discovered by Nicholson and Carlisle, in 1800, that water was *decomposed* by the pile of Volta; that is, it was found that when the wires of the pile were placed with their ends near each other in the fluid, a stream of bubbles of air arose from each wire, and these airs were found on examination to be oxygen and hydrogen; which, as we have had to narrate, had already been found to be the constituents of water. This was, as Davy says[1], the true origin of all that has been done in electro-chemical science. It was found that other substances also suffered a like decomposition under the same circumstances. Certain metallic solutions were decomposed, and an alkali was separated on the negative plates of the apparatus. Cruickshank, in pursuing these experiments, added to them many important new results; such as the decomposition of muriates of magnesia, soda, and ammonia by the pile; and the general observation that the alkaline matter always appeared at the negative, and the acid at the positive, pole.

Such was the state of the subject when one who was destined to do so much for its advance, first contributed his labours to it. Humphry Davy was a young man who had been apprenticed to a surgeon at Penzance, and having shown an ardent love and a strong aptitude for chemical research, was, in 1798, made the superintendent of a "Pneumatic

[1] P. T. 1826, p. 386.

Institution," established at Bristol by Dr. Beddoes, for the purpose of discovering medical powers of factitious airs[2]. But his main attention was soon drawn to galvanism; and when, in consequence of the reputation he had acquired, he was, in 1801, appointed lecturer at the Royal Institution in London, (then recently established,) he was soon put in possession of a galvanic apparatus of great power; and with this he was not long in obtaining the most striking results.

His first paper on the subject[3] is sent from Bristol, in September 1800; and describes experiments, in which he had found that the decompositions observed by Nicholson and Carlisle go on, although the water, or other substance in which the two wires are plunged, be separated into two portions, provided these portions are connected by muscular or other fibres. This use of muscular fibres was, probably, a remnant of the original disposition, or accident, by which galvanism had been connected with physiology, as much as with chemistry. Davy, however, soon went on towards the conclusion, that the phenomena were altogether chemical in their nature. He had already conjectured[4], in 1802, that all decompositions might be *polar*; that is, that in all cases of chemical decomposition, the elements might be related to each other as electrically positive and negative; a thought which it was the peculiar glory of his school to confirm and place in a distinct light. At this

[2] Paris, Life of Davy, i. 58.

[3] Nicholson's Journal, 4to. iv. 275.

[4] P. T. 1826.

period such a view was far from obvious; and it was contended by many, on the contrary, that the elements which the voltaic apparatus brought to view, were not liberated from combinations, but generated. In 1806, Davy attempted the solution of this question; he showed that the ingredients which had been supposed to be produced by electricity, were due to impurities in the water, or to the decomposition of the vessels; and thus removed all preliminary difficulties. And then, as he says[5], "referring to my experiments of 1800, 1801, and 1802, and to a number of new facts, which showed that inflammable substances and oxygen, alkalies and acids, and oxidable and noble metals, were in electrical relations of positive and negative, I drew the conclusion, *that the combinations and decompositions by electricity were referrible to the law of electrical attractions and repulsions*," and advanced the hypotheses, "*that chemical and electrical attractions were produced by the same cause, acting in the one case on particles, in the other on masses*;" "*and that the same property, under different modifications, was the cause of all the phenomena exhibited by different voltaic combinations.*"

Although this is the enunciation, in tolerably precise terms, of the great discovery of this epoch, it was, at the period of which we speak, conjectured rather than proved; and we shall find that neither Davy nor his followers, for a considerable period, apprehended it with that distinctness which makes a

[5] P. T. 1826, 389.

discovery complete. But in a very short time afterwards, Davy drew great additional notice to his researches by effecting, in pursuance, as it appeared, of his theoretical views, the decomposition of potassa into a metallic base and oxygen. This was, as he truly said, in the memorandum written in his journal at the instant, "a capital experiment." This discovery was soon followed by that of the decomposition of soda; and shortly after, of other bodies of the same kind; and the interest and activity of the whole chemical world were turned to the subject in an intense degree.

At this period, there might be noticed three great branches of speculation on this subject; *the theory of the pile, the theory of electrical decomposition*, and *the theory of the identity of chemical and electrical forces*; which last doctrine, however, was found to include the other two, as might have been anticipated from the time of its first suggestion.

It will not be necessary to say much on the theories of the voltaic pile, as separate from other parts of the subject. The *contact-theory*, which ascribed the action to the contact of different metals, was maintained by Volta himself; but gradually disappeared, as it was proved (by Wollaston[6] especially,) that the effect was inseparably connected with oxidation or other chemical changes. The theories of electro-chemical decomposition were numerous, and especially after the promulgation of

[6] P. T. 1801, p. 427.

Davy's Memoir in 1806; and, whatever might be the defects under which these speculations for a long time laboured, they were powerfully urged on in the direction in which truth lay, by Davy's discoveries and views. That there remained something still to be done, to give full evidence and consistency to the theory, appears from this;—that some of the most important parts of Davy's results struck his followers as extraordinary paradoxes;—for instance, the fact, that the decomposed elements are transferred from one part of the circuit to another, in a form which escapes the cognizance of our senses, through intervening substances for which they have a strong affinity. It was found afterwards that the circumstance which appeared to make the process so wonderful, was, in fact, the condition of its going on at all. Davy's expressions often seem to indicate the most exact notions: for instance, he says, "It is very natural to suppose that the repellent and attractive energies are communicated from one particle to another of the same kind, so as to establish a conducting *chain* in the fluid; and that the locomotion takes place in consequence[6];" and yet at other times he speaks of the elements as *attracted* and *repelled* by the metallic surfaces which form the *poles*;—a different, and, as it appeared afterwards, an untenable view. Mr. Faraday, who supplied what was wanting, justly notices this vagueness. He says[7], that though, in Davy's celebrated Memoir of 1806, the points established are of the utmost value, "the mode of action by

[6] Paris, p. 154.

[7] Researches, 482.

which the effects take place is stated very generally; so generally, indeed, that probably a dozen precise schemes of electro-chemical action might be drawn up, differing essentially from each other, yet all agreeing with the statement there given." And at a period a little later, being reproached by Davy's brother with injustice in this expression, he substantiated his assertion by an enumeration of twelve such schemes which had been published.

But yet we cannot look upon this Memoir of 1806, otherwise than as a great event, perhaps the most important event of the epoch now under review. And as such it was recognised at once all over Europe. In particular, it received the distinguished honour of being crowned by the Institute of France, although that country and England were then engaged in fierce hostility. Buonaparte had proposed a prize of sixty thousand francs "to the person who by his experiments and discoveries should advance the knowledge of electricity and galvanism, as much as Franklin and Volta did;" and "of three thousand francs for the best experiment which should be made in the course of each year on the galvanic fluid;" the latter prize was, by the First Class of the Institute, awarded to Davy.

From this period he rose rapidly to honours and distinctions, and reached a height of scientific fame as great as has ever fallen to the lot of a discoverer in so short a time. I shall not, however, dwell on such circumstances, but confine myself to the progress of my subject.

Sect. 2.—Establishment of the Electro-chemical Theory by Faraday.

THE defects of Davy's theoretical views will be seen most clearly by explaining what Faraday added to them. Michael Faraday was in every way fitted and led to become Davy's successor in his great career of discovery. In 1812, being then a book-seller's apprentice, he attended the lectures of Davy, which at that period excited the highest admiration[8]. "My desire to escape from trade," Mr. Faraday says, "which I thought vicious and selfish, and to enter into the service of science, which I imagined made its pursuers amiable and liberal, induced me at last to take the bold and simple step of writing to Sir H. Davy." He was favourably received, and, in the next year, became Davy's assistant at the Institution; and afterwards his successor. The Institution which produced such researches as those of these two men, may well be considered as a great school of exact and philosophical chemistry. Mr. Faraday, from the beginning of his course of inquiry, appears to have had the consciousness that he was engaged on a great connected work. His "Experimental Researches," which appeared in a series of Memoirs in the Philosophical Transactions, are divided into short paragraphs, numbered in a continued order from 1 up to 1160, at the time at which I write[9]; and destined, probably, to extend much further. Yet

[8] Paris, ii. 3.

[9] December, 1835.

this unity of purpose was not at first obvious. His two first memoirs were upon subjects which we have already treated of, voltaic induction, and the evolution of electricity from magnetism. His "Third Series" has also been already referred to. Its object was, as a preparatory step towards further investigation, to show the identity of voltaic and animal electricity with that of the electrical machine; and as machine electricity differs from the other kinds in being successively in a state of tension and explosion, instead of a continued current, Mr. Faraday succeeded in identifying it with them, by causing the electrical discharge to pass through a bad conductor into a discharging-train of vast extent; nothing less, indeed, than the whole fabric of the metallic gas-pipes and water-pipes of London. In this Memoir[10] it is easy to see already traces of the general theoretical views at which he had arrived; but these are not expressly stated till his "Fifth Series;" his intermediate Fourth Series being occupied by another subsidiary labour on the conditions of conduction. At length, however, in the Fifth Series, which was read to the Royal Society in June 1833, he approaches the theory of electro-chemical decomposition. Most preceding theorists, and Davy amongst the number, had referred this result to *attractive powers* residing in the *poles* of the apparatus; and had even pretended to compare the intensity of this attraction at different distances from the poles. By a number of singularly beauti-

[10] P. T. 1833.

ful and skilful experiments, Mr. Faraday shows that the phenomena can with no propriety be ascribed to the attraction of the poles[11]. "As the substances evolved in cases of electro-chemical decomposition may be made to appear against air[12], which, according to common language, is not a conductor, nor is decomposed; or against water[13], which is a conductor, and can be decomposed; as well as against the metal poles, which are excellent conductors, but undecomposable; there appears but little reason to consider this phenomenon generally as due to the attraction or attractive powers of the latter, when used in the ordinary way, since similar attractions can hardly be imagined in the former instances."

Faraday's opinion, and, indeed, the only way of expressing the results of his experiments, was, that the chemical elements, in obedience to the direction of the voltaic currents established in the decomposing substance, were evolved, or, as he prefers to say, *ejected* at its extremities[14]. He afterwards states that the influence which is present in the electric current may be described[15] as *an axis of power, having contrary forces exactly equal in amount in contrary directions.*

Having arrived at this point, Faraday rightly wished to reject the term *poles*, and other words which could hardly be used without suggesting doctrines now proved to be erroneous. He considered, in the case of bodies electrically decomposed, or, as

[11] Researches, Art. 497. [12] 465, 469. [13] 495.
[14] 493. [15] 517.

he termed them, *electrolytes*, the elements as travelling in two opposite directions; which, with reference to the direction of terrestrial magnetism, might be considered as naturally east and west; and he conceived elements as, in this way, arriving at the doors or outlets at which they finally made their separate appearance. The doors he called *electrodes*, and, separately, the *anode* and the *cathode*[16]; and the elements which thus travel he termed the *anïon* and the *cation* (or *cathïon*[17]). By means of this nomenclature he was able to express his general results with much more distinctness and facility.

But this general view of the electrolytical process required to be pursued further, in order to explain the nature of the action. The identity of electrical and chemical forces, which had been hazarded as a conjecture by Davy, and adopted as the basis of chemistry by Berzelius, could only be established by exact measures and rigorous proofs. Faraday had, in his proof of the identity of voltaic and electric agency, attempted also to devise such a measure as should give him a comparison of their quantity; and in this way he proved that[18] two small wires of platina and zinc, placed near each other, and immersed in dilute acid for three seconds, yield as much electricity as the electrical battery, charged by ten

[16] Art. 663.

[17] The analogy of the Greek derivation requires *catïon*; but to make the relation to *cathode* obvious to the English reader, and to avoid a violation of the habits of English pronunciation, I should prefer *cathïon*.

[18] Art. 371.

turns of a large machine; and this was established both by its momentary electro-magnetic effect, and by the amount of its chemical action[19].

It was in his "Seventh Series," that he finally established a principle of definite measurement of the amount of electrolytical action, and described an instrument which he termed[20] a *volta-electrometer*. In this instrument, the amount of action was measured by the quantity of water decomposed: and it was necessary, in order to give validity to the mensuration, to show (as Faraday did show) that neither the size of the electrodes, nor the intensity of the current, nor the strength of the acid solution which acted on the plates of the pile, disturbed the accuracy of this measure. He proved, by experiments upon a great variety of substances, of the most different kinds, that the electro-chemical action is definite in amount according to the measurement of the new instrument[21]. He had already, at an earlier period[22], asserted, that *the chemical power of a current of electricity is in direct proportion to the absolute quantity of electricity which passes;* but the volta-electrometer enabled him to fix with more precision the meaning of this general proposition, as well as to place it beyond doubt.

The vast importance of this step in chemistry soon came into view. By the use of the volta-electrometer, Faraday obtained, for each elementary substance, a number which represented the relative amount of its decomposition, and which might pro-

[19] Art. 375. [20] 739. [21] 758, 814. [22] 377.

perly[23] be called its "electro-chemical equivalent." And the question naturally occurs, whether these numbers bore any relation to any previously established chemical measures. The answer is remarkable. *They were no other than the atomic weights of the Daltonian theory*, which formed the climax of the previous ascent of chemistry; and thus here, as everywhere in the progress of science, the generalisations of one generation are absorbed in the wider generalisations of the next.

But in order to reach securely this wider generalisation, Faraday combined the two branches of the subject which we have already noticed;—the *theory of electrical decomposition* with the *theory of the pile*. For his researches on the origin of activity of the voltaic circuit (his Eighth Series), led him to see more clearly than any one before him, what, as we have said, the most sagacious of preceding philosophers had maintained, that the current in the pile was due to the mutual chemical action of its elements. He was led to consider the processes which go on in the *exciting-cell*, and in the decomposing place, as of the same kind, but opposite in direction. The chemical *composition* of the fluid with the zinc, in the common apparatus, produces, when the circuit is completed, a current of electric influence in the wire; and this current, if it pass through an electrolyte, manifests itself by *decomposition*, overcoming the chemical affinity which there resists it. An electrolyte cannot conduct without being decomposed. The forces at the point of

[23] Art. 792.

composition and the point of decomposition are of the same kind, and are opposed to each other by means of the conducting-wire; the wire may properly be spoken of[24] as *conducting chemical affinity*: it allows two forces of the same kind to oppose one another[25]; electricity is only another mode of the exertion of chemical forces[26]; and we might express all the circumstances of the voltaic pile without using any other term than chemical affinity, though that of electricity may be very convenient[27]. Bodies are held together by a definite power, which, when it ceases to discharge that office, may be thrown into the condition of an electric current[28].

Thus the great principle of the identity of electrical and chemical action was completely established. It was, as Faraday with great candour says[29], a confirmation of the general views put forth by Davy in 1806, and might be expressed in his terms, that "chemical and electrical attractions are produced by the same cause;" but it is easy to see that neither was the full import of these expressions understood, nor were the quantities to which they refer conceived as measurable quantities, nor was the assertion anything but a sagacious conjecture, till Faraday gave the interpretation, measure, and proof, of which we have spoken. The evidence of the incompleteness of the views of his predecessor we have already adduced, in speaking of his vague and inconsistent theoretical account of decomposition. The confir-

[24] Art. 918. [25] 910. [26] 915.
[27] 917. [28] 855. [29] 965.

mation of Davy's discoveries by Faraday is of the nature of Newton's confirmation of the views of Borelli and Hooke respecting gravity, or like Young's confirmation of the undulatory theory of Huyghens.

We must not omit to repeat here the moral which we wish to draw from all great discoveries, that they depend upon the combination of *exact facts* with *clear ideas*. The former of these conditions is easily illustrated in the case of Davy and Faraday, both admirable and delicate experimenters. Davy's rapidity and resource in experimenting were extraordinary[30], and extreme elegance and ingenuity distinguish almost every process of Faraday. He had published, in 1829, a work on "Chemical Manipulation," in which directions are given for performing in the neatest manner all chemical processes. Manipulation, as he there truly says, is to the chemist like the external senses to the mind[31]; and without the supply of fit materials which such senses only can give, the mind can acquire no real knowledge.

But still the operations of the mind as well as the information of the senses, ideas as well as facts, are requisite for the attainment of any knowledge; and all great steps in science require a peculiar distinctness and vividness of thought in the discoverer. This it is difficult to exemplify in any better way than by the discoveries themselves. Both Davy and Faraday possessed this vividness of mind; and it was a consequence of this endowment, that Davy's lec-

[30] Paris, i. 145.

[31] Pref. p. ii.

tures upon chemistry, and Faraday's upon almost any subject of physical philosophy, were of the most brilliant and captivating character. In discovering the nature of voltaic action, the essential intellectual requisite was to have a distinct conception of that which Faraday expressed by the remarkable phrase[32], "*an axis of power having equal and opposite forces:*" and the distinctness of this idea in Faraday's mind shines forth in every part of his writings. Thus he says, the force which determines the decomposition of a body is *in* the body, not in the poles[33]. But for the most part he can of course only convey this fundamental idea by illustrations. Thus[34] he represents the voltaic circuit by a double circle, studded with the elements of the circuit, and shows how the *anïons* travel round it in one direction, and the *cathïons* in the opposite. He considers[35] the powers at the two places of action as balancing against each other through the medium of the conductors, in a manner analogous to that in which mechanical forces are balanced against each other by the intervention of the lever. It is impossible to him[36] to resist the idea, that the voltaic current must be preceded by state of tension in its interrupted condition, which is relieved when the circuit is completed. He appears to possess the idea of this kind of force with the same eminent distinctness with which Archimedes in the ancient, and Stevinus in the modern history of science, possessed the idea of pressure, and were

[32] Art. 517. [33] 661. [34] 963.
[35] 917. [36] 950.

thus able to found the science of mechanics[37]. And when he cannot obtain these distinct modes of conception, he is dissatisfied, and conscious of defect. Thus in the relation between magnetism and electricity[38], "there appears to be a link in the chain of effects, a wheel in the physical mechanism of the action, as yet unrecognised." All this variety of expression shows how deeply seated is the thought. This conception of chemical affinity as a peculiar influence or force, which, acting in opposite directions, combines and resolves bodies;—which may be liberated and thrown into the form of a voltaic current, and thus be transferred to remote points, and applied in various ways;—is essential to the understanding, as it was to the making, of these discoveries.

By those to whom this conception has been conveyed, I venture to trust that I shall be held to have given a faithful account of this important event in the history of science. We may, before we quit the subject, notice one or two of the remarkable subordinate features of Faraday's discoveries.

Sect. 3.—*Consequences of Faraday's Discoveries.*

FARADAY'S volta-electrometer, in conjunction with the method he had already employed, as we have seen, for the comparison of voltaic and common electricity, enabled him to measure the actual quantity of electricity which is exhibited, in given cases,

[37] Art. 990. [38] 1114.

in the form of chemical affinity. His results appeared in numbers of that enormous amount which so often comes before us in the expression of natural laws. One grain of water[39] will require for its decomposition as much electricity as would make a powerful flash of lightning. By further calculation, he finds this quantity to be not less than 800,000 charges of his Leyden battery[40]; and this is, by his theory of the identity of the combining with the decomposing force, the quantity of electricity which is naturally associated with the elements of the grain of water, endowing them with their mutual affinity.

Many of the subordinate facts and laws which were brought to light by these researches, clearly point to generalisations, not included in that which we have had to consider, and not yet discovered: such laws do not properly belong to our main plan, which is to make our way *up to* the generalisations. But there is one which so evidently promises to have an important bearing on future chemical theories, that I will briefly mention it. The class of bodies which are capable of electrical decomposition is limited by a very remarkable law: they are such binary compounds only as consist of *single* proportionals of their elementary principles. It does not belong to us here to speculate on the possible import of this curious law; which, if not fully established, Faraday has rendered, at least, highly probable[41]: but it is impossible not to see how closely it connects the atomic with the electro-chemical theory; and in the

[39] Art. 853. [40] 861. [41] 697.

connexion of these two great members of chemistry, is involved the prospect of its reaching wider generalisations, and principles more profound than we have yet caught sight of.

As another example of this connexion, I will, finally, notice that Faraday has employed his discoveries in order to decide, in some doubtful cases, what is the true chemical equivalent[42]; "I have such conviction," he says, "that the power which governs electro-decomposition and ordinary chemical attractions is the same; and such confidence in the overruling influence of those natural laws which render the former definite, as to feel no hesitation in believing that the latter must submit to them too. Such being the case, I can have no doubt that, assuming hydrogen as 1, and dismissing small fractions for the simplicity of expression, the equivalent number or atomic weight of oxygen is 8, of chlorine 36, of bromine 78·4, of lead 103·5, of tin 59, &c.; notwithstanding that a very high authority doubles several of these numbers."

Sect. 4.—*Reception of the Electro-chemical Theory.*

THE epoch of establishment of the electro-chemical theory, like other great scientific epochs, must have its sequel, the period of its reception and confirmation, application and extension. In that period we are living, and it must be the task of future historians to trace its course.

[42] Art. 851.

We may, however, say a word on the reception which the theory met with, in the forms which it assumed, anterior to the labours of Faraday. Even before the great discovery of Davy, Grotthuss, in 1805, had written upon the theory of electro-chemical decomposition; but he and, as we have seen, Davy, and afterwards other writers, as Riffault and Chompré, in 1807, referred the effects to the poles[43]. But the most important attempt to appropriate and employ the generalisation which these discoveries suggested, was that of Berzelius; who adopted at once the view of the identity, or at least the universal connexion, of electrical relations with chemical affinity. He considered[44], that in all chemical combinations the elements may be considered as electro-positive and electro-negative; and made this opposition the basis of his chemical doctrines; in which he was followed by a large body of the chemists of Germany. And he held that the heat and light, evolved during cases of powerful combination, are the consequence of the electric discharge which is at that moment taking place: a conjecture which Faraday at first spoke of with praise[45]. But at a later period he more sagely says[46], that the flame which is produced in such cases exhibits but a small portion of the electric power which really acts. "These therefore may not, cannot, be taken as evidences of the nature of the action; but are merely incidental

[43] Faraday (Researches, Art. 481, 492).
[44] Ann. Chim. lxxxvi. 146, for 1813.
[45] Art. 870. [46] 960.

results, incomparably small in relation to the forces concerned, and supplying no information of the way in which the particles are active on each other, or in which their forces are finally arranged." And comparing the evidence which he himself had given of the principle on which Berzelius's speculations rested, with the speculations themselves, Faraday justly conceived, that he had transferred the doctrine from the domain of what he calls *doubtful knowledge*, to that of inductive certainty.

Now that we are arrived at the starting-place, from which this well-proved truth, the identity of electric and chemical forces, must make its future advances, it would be trifling to dwell longer on the details of the diffusion of that doubtful knowledge which preceded this more certain science. Our history of chemistry is, therefore, here at an end. I have, as far as I could, executed my task; which was, to mark all the great steps of its advance, from the most unconnected facts and the most imperfect speculations, to the highest generalisation at which chemical philosophers have yet arrived.

Yet it will be to our purpose to say a few words on the connexion of this science with those of which we are next to treat; and that I now proceed to do.

CHAPTER X.

Transition from the Chemical to the Classificatory Sciences.

It is the object and the boast of chemistry to acquire a knowledge of bodies which is more exact and constant than any knowledge borrowed from their sensible qualities can be; since it penetrates into their intimate constitution, and discloses to us the invariable laws of their composition. But yet it will be seen, on a little reflection, that such knowledge could not have any existence, if we were not also attentive to their sensible qualities.

The whole fabric of chemistry rests, even at the present day, upon the opposition of acids and bases: an acid was certainly at first known by its sensible qualities, and how otherwise, even now, do we perceive its quality? It was a great discovery of modern times that earths and alkalies have for their bases metals: but what are metals? or how, except from lustre, hardness, weight, and the like, do we recognise a body as a metal? And how, except by such characters, even before its analysis, was it known to be an earth or an alkali? We must suppose some classification established, before we can make any advance by experiment or observation.

It is easy to see that all attempts to avoid this difficulty by referring to processes and analogies, as

well as to substances, bring us back to the same point in a circle of fallacies. If we say that an acid and alkali are known by combining with each other, we still must ask, What is the criterion that they have combined? If we say that the distinctive qualities of metals and earths are, that metals become earths by oxidation, we must still inquire how we recognise the process of oxidation? We have seen how important a part combustion plays in the history of chemical speculation; and we may usefully form such classes of bodies as *combustibles* and *supporters of combustion*. But even combustion is not capable of being infallibly known, for it passes by insensible shades into oxidation. We can find no basis for our reasonings, which does not assume a classification of obvious facts and qualities.

But any classification of substances on such grounds, appears, at first sight, to involve us in vagueness, ambiguity, and contradiction. Do we really take the sensible qualities of an acid as the criterion of its being an acid?—for instance, its sourness? Prussic acid, arsenious acid, are not sour. "I remember," says Dr. Paris,[1] "a chemist having been exposed to much ridicule from speaking of a *sweet* acid,—why not?" When Davy had discovered potassium, it was disputed whether it was a metal; for though its lustre and texture are metallic, it is so light as to swim on water. And if potassium be allowed to be a metal, is silicium one, a body which wants the metallic lustre, and is a non-conductor of

[1] Life of Davy, i. 263.

electricity? It is clear that, at least, the *obvious* application of a classification by physical characters, is attended with endless perplexity.

But since we cannot even begin our researches without assuming a classification, and since the forms of such a classification which first occur, end in apparent confusion, it is clear that we must look to our philosophy for a solution of this difficulty; and must avoid the embarrassments and contradictions of casual and unreflective classification, by obtaining a consistent and philosophical arrangement. We must employ external characters and analogies in a connected and systematic manner; we must have *classificatory sciences*, and these must have a bearing even on Chemistry.

Accordingly, the most philosophical chemists now proceed upon this principle. "The method which I have followed," says M. Thenard, in his *Traité de Chimie*, published in 1824, "is, to unite in one group all analogous bodies; and the advantage of this method, which is that employed by naturalists, is very great, especially in the study of the metals and their compounds[2]." In this, as in all good systems of chemistry, which have appeared since the establishment of the phlogistic theory, combustion, and the analogous processes, are one great element in the arrangement, while the difference of metallic and non-metallic, is another element. Thus Thenard, in the first place, speaks of oxygen; in the next place, of the non-metallic combustibles, as hydrogen,

[2] Pref., p. viii.

carbon, sulphur, chlorine; and in the next place, of metals. But the metals are again divided into six sections, with reference, principally, to their facility of combination with oxygen. Thus, the first section is the metals of the earths; the second, the metals of the alkalies; the third, the easily oxidable metals, as iron; the fourth, metals less oxidable, as copper and lead; the fifth section contains only mercury and osmium; and the sixth, what were at an earlier period termed the *noble* metals, gold, silver, platinum, and others.

How such principles are to be applied, so as to produce a definite and consistent arrangement, will be explained in speaking of the philosophy of the classificatory sciences; but there are one or two peculiarities in the classes of bodies thus recognised by modern chemistry, which it may be useful to notice.

1. The distinction of metallic and non-metallic is still employed, as of fundamental importance. The discovery of new metals is so much connected with the inquiries concerning chemical elements, that we may notice the general progress of such discoveries. *Gold, Silver, Iron, Copper, Quicksilver, Lead, Tin,* were known from the earliest antiquity. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, mine-directors, like George Agricola, had advanced so far in practical metallurgy, that they had discovered the means of extracting three additional metals, *Zinc, Bismuth, Antimony.* After this, there was no new metal discovered for a century, and then such discoveries were made by

the theoretical chemists, a race of men who had not existed before Beccher and Stahl. Thus *Arsenic* and *Cobalt* were made known by Brandt, in the middle of the eighteenth century, and we have a long list of similar discoveries belonging to the same period; *Nickel*, *Manganese*, and *Tungsten*, which were detected by Cronstedt, Gahn and Scheele, and Delhuyart, respectively; metals of a very different kind, *Tellurium* and *Molybdenum*, which were brought to light by Müller, Scheele, Bergman, and Hielm; *Platinum*, which was known as early as 1741, but with the ore of which, in 1802 and 1803, the English chemists, Wollaston and Tennant, found that no less than four other new metals (*Palladium*, *Rhodium*, *Iridium*, and *Osmium*) were associated. Finally, (omitting some other new metals,) we have another period of discovery, opened in 1807, by Davy's discovery of *Potassium*, and including the resolution of all, or almost all, the alkalies and earths into metallic bases.

2. Attempts have been made to indicate the classification of chemical substances by some peculiarity in the name; and the metals, for example, have been designated generally by names in *um*, like the Latin names of the ancient metals, *aurum*, *ferrum*. This artifice is a convenient nomenclature for the purpose of marking a recognised difference; and it would be worth the while of chemists to agree to make it universal, by writing molybden*um* and platin*um*; which is sometimes done, but not always.

3. I am not now to attempt to determine how far this class,—metals,—extends; but when the analogies

of the class cease to hold, the nomenclature must also change. Thus, some chemists, as Dr. Thomson, have conceived that the base of silica is more analogous to carbon and boron, which form acids with oxygen, than it is to the metals; and he has accordingly associated this base with these substances, and has given it the same termination, *Silicon*. But on the validity of this analogy chemists appear not to be generally agreed.

4. There is another class of bodies which have attracted much notice among modern chemists, and which have also been assimilated to each other in the form of their names; the English writers calling them *Chlorine, Fluorine, Iodine, Bromine*, while the French use the terms *Chlore, Phtore, Iode, Brome*. We have already noticed the establishment of the doctrine that muriatic acid is formed of a base, chlorine, and of hydrogen, as a great reform in the oxygen theory; with regard to which rival claims were advanced by Davy, and by MM. Gay-Lussac and Thenard in 1809. Iodine, a remarkable body which, from a dark powder, is converted into a violet-coloured gas by the application of heat, was also, in 1813, the subject of a similar rivalry between the same English and French chemists. Bromine was only discovered as late as 1826; and fluorine, or *phtor*, as, from its destructive nature, it has been proposed to term it, has not been obtained as a separate substance, and is inferred to exist by analogy only. These analogies are very peculiar; for instance, by combination with metals they form

salts; by combination with hydrogen they form very strong acids; and all, at the common temperature of the atmosphere, operate on other bodies in the most energetic manner. Berzelius[3] proposes to call them *halogenous* bodies, or *halogenes*.

5. The number of elementary substances which are at present presented in our treatises of chemistry[4] is *fifty-three*. It is naturally often asked what evidence we have, that these are *elementary*, or that they are *all*;—how we know that new elements may not hereafter be discovered, or these supposed simple bodies resolved into simpler still? To these questions we can only answer, by referring to the history of chemistry;—by pointing out what chemists have understood by analysis, according to the preceding narrative. They have considered, as the analysis of a substance, that elementary constitution of it which gives the only intelligible explanation of the results of chemical manipulation, and which is proved to be complete as to quantity, by the balance, since the whole can only be equal to all its parts. It is impossible to maintain that new substances may not hereafter be discovered; for they may lurk, even in familiar substances, in doses so minute that they have not yet been missed amid the inevitable slight inaccuracies of all analysis, in the way in which iodine and bromine remained so long undetected in sea-water; and new minerals, or old ones not yet sufficiently

[3] Chem., i. 262.

[4] Turner, p. 971.

examined, can hardly fail to add something to our list. As to the possibility of a further analysis of our supposed simple bodies, we may venture to say that, in regard to such supposed simple bodies as compose a numerous and well-characterised class, no such step can be made, except through some great change in chemical theory, which gives us a new view of all the general relations which chemistry has yet discovered. The proper evidence of the reality of any supposed new analysis is, that it is more consistent with the known analogies of chemistry, to suppose the process analytical than synthetical. Thus, as has already been said, chemists admit the existence of fluorine, from the analogy of chlorine; and Davy, when it was found that ammonia formed an amalgam with mercury, was tempted to assign to it a metallic basis. But then he again hesitates[5], and doubts whether the analogies of our knowledge are not better preserved by supposing that ammonia, as a compound of hydrogen and another principle, is "a type of the composition of the metals."

Our history, which is the history of what we know, has little to do with such conjectures. There are, however, some not unimportant principles which bear upon them, and which, as they are usually employed, belong to the science which next comes under our review, Mineralogy.

[5] Elem. Chem. Phil. 1812, p. 481.

BOOK XV.

THE ANALYTICO-CLASSIFICATORY SCIENCE.

HISTORY OF MINERALOGY.

Κρύσταλλον φαέθοντα διαυγέα λάζεο χερσὶ,
Λᾶαν ἀπόῤῥοιαν περιφεγγέος ἀμβρότου αἴγλης,
Αἰθέρι δ' ἀθανάτων μέγα τέρπεται ἄφθιτον ἦτορ.
Τόν κ' εἴπερ μετὰ χειρὰς ἔχων, περὶ νηὸν ἵκηαι,
Οὔτις τοι μακάρων ἀρνήσεται εὐχωλῆσι.

ORPHEUS. *Lithica.*

Now, if the bold but pious thought be thine,
To reach our spacious temple's inner shrine,
Take in thy reverent hands the crystal stone,
Where heavenly light in earthy shroud is shown;—
Where, moulded into measured form, with rays
Complex yet clear, the eternal Ether plays;
This if thou firmly hold and rightly use,
Not long the gods thy ardent wish refuse.

INTRODUCTION.

Sect. 1.—*Of the Classificatory Sciences.*

THE horizon of the sciences spreads wider and wider before us, as we advance in our task of taking a survey of the vast domain. We have seen that the existence of chemistry as a science which declares the ingredients and essential constitution of all kinds of bodies, implies the existence of another corresponding science, which shall divide bodies into kinds, and point out steadily and precisely what bodies they are which we have analyzed. But a science thus dividing and defining bodies, is but one member of an order of sciences different from those which we have hitherto treated of; namely, the *classificatory sciences.* Such sciences there must be, not only having reference to the bodies with which chemistry deals, but also to all things respecting which we aspire to obtain any general knowledge, as, for instance, plants and animals. Indeed it will be found, that it is with regard to these latter objects, to organized beings, that the process of scientific classification has been most successfully exercised; while with regard to inorganic substances, the formation of a satisfactory system of arrangement has been found extremely difficult; nor has the necessity of such a system been recognised by chemists so distinctly and constantly as it ought to be. The best exem-

plifications of these branches of knowledge, of which we now have to speak, will, therefore, be found in the organic world, in Botany and Zoology; but we will, in the first place, take a brief view of the science which classifies inorganic bodies, and of which Mineralogy is hitherto the very imperfect representative.

The principles and rules of the classificatory sciences, as well as of those of the other orders of sciences, must be fully explained when we come to treat of the Philosophy of the Sciences; and cannot be introduced here, where we have to do with history only. But I may observe very briefly, that with the process of *classing*, is joined the process of *naming*;—that names imply classification;—and that the rudest and earliest application of language presupposes a distribution of objects according to their kinds;—but that such a spontaneous and unsystematic distribution cannot, in the cases we now have to consider, answer the purposes of exact and general knowledge. Our classification of objects must be made consistent and systematic, in order to be scientific; we must discover marks and characters, properties and conditions, which are constant in their occurrence and relations; we must form our classes, we must impose our names, according to such marks. We can thus, and thus alone, arrive at that precise, certain, and systematic knowledge, which we seek; that is, at science. The object, then, of the classificatory sciences is to obtain FIXED CHARACTERS of the kinds of things; and the criterion of the fitness of

names is, that THEY MAKE GENERAL PROPOSITIONS POSSIBLE.

I proceed to review the progress of certain sciences on these principles, and first, though briefly, the science of Mineralogy.

Sect. 2.—Of Mineralogy as the Analytico-classificatory Science.

MINERALOGY, as it has hitherto been cultivated, is, as I have already said, an imperfect representative of the department of human knowledge to which it belongs. The attempts at the science have generally been made by collecting various kinds of information respecting mineral bodies; but the science which we require is a complete and consistent classified system of all inorganic bodies. For chemistry proceeds upon the principle that the constitution of a body invariably determines its properties; and consequently, its kind; but we cannot apply this principle, except we can speak with precision of the *kind* of a body, as well as of its composition. We cannot attach any sense to the assertion, that soda or baryta has a metal for its base, except we know what a metal is, or at least what properties it implies. It may not be, indeed it is not, possible, to define the kinds of bodies by words only; but the classification must proceed by some constant and generally applicable process; and the knowledge which has reference to the classification will be precise as far as

this process is precise, and vague as far as that is vague.

There must be, then, as a necessary supplement to chemistry, a science of those properties of bodies by which we divide them into kinds. Mineralogy is the branch of knowledge which has discharged the office of such a science, so far as it has been discharged; and, indeed, has been gradually approaching to a clear consciousness of its real place and whole task; I shall give the history of some of the advances which have thus been made. They are, principally, the establishment and use of external characters, especially of *Crystalline Form*, as a fixed character of definite substances; and the attempts to bring into view the connexion of chemical constitution and external properties, made in the shape of mineralogical *Systems;* both those in which *chemical methods of arrangement* are adopted, and those which profess to classify by the *natural-history method.*

CRYSTALLOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

Prelude to the Epoch of De Lisle and Haüy.

Of all the physical properties of bodies, there is none so fixed, and in every way so remarkable, as this;—that the same chemical compound always assumes, with the utmost precision, the same geometrical form. This identity, however, is not immediately obvious; it is often obscured by various mixtures and imperfections in the substance; and even when it is complete, it is not immediately recognised by a common eye, since it consists, not in the equality of the sides or faces of the figures, but in the equality of their angles. Hence it is not surprising that the constancy of form was not detected by the earlier observers. Pliny says[1], "Why crystal is generated in a hexagonal form, it is difficult to assign a reason; and the more so, since, while its faces are smoother than any art could make them, the pyramidal points are *not all of the same kind.*" The quartz crystals of the Alps, to which he refers, are, in some specimens, very regular, while in others, one side of the pyramid becomes much the largest; yet the angles remain constantly the same. But when the

[1] Nat. Hist. xxvii. 2.

whole shape varied so much, the angles also seemed to vary. Thus Conrad Gessner, a very learned naturalist, who, in 1564, published at Zurich his work, "De rerum Fossilium, Lapidum et Gemmarum maxime, Figuris," says[2], "One crystal differs from another in its angles, and consequently in its figure." And Cæsalpinus, who, as we shall find, did so much in establishing fixed characters in botany, was led by some of his general views to disbelieve the fixity of the form of crystals. In his work "De Metallicis," published at Nuremberg in 1602, he says[3], "To ascribe to inanimate bodies a definite form, does not appear consentaneous to reason; for it is the office of organization to produce a definite form;" an opinion very natural in one who had been immersed in the study of the general analogies of the forms of plants. But the rejection of this definiteness of form a hundred and eighty years later, when its existence had been proved, and its laws developed by numerous observers, cannot be ascribed to anything but strong prejudice; yet this was the course taken by no less a person than Buffon. "The form of crystallization," says he[4], "is *not a constant character*, but is more equivocal and more variable than any other of the characters by which minerals are to be distinguished." And accordingly, he makes no use of this most important feature in his history of minerals. This strange perverseness may perhaps be ascribed to the dislike which Buffon is said

[2] p. 25. [3] p. 97 [4] Hist. des Min. p. 343.

to have entertained for Linnæus, who had made crystalline form a leading character of minerals.

It is not necessary to mark all the minute steps by which mineralogists were gradually led to see clearly the nature and laws of the fixity of crystalline forms. These forms were at first noticed in that substance which is peculiarly called rock-crystal or quartz; and afterwards in various stones and gems, in salts obtained from various solutions, and in snow. But those who observed the remarkable regular figures which these substances assume, were at first impelled onwards in their speculations by the natural tendency of the human mind to generalise and guess, rather than to examine and measure. They attempted to snatch at once the general laws of geometrical regularity of these occurrences, or to connect them with some doctrine concerning formative causes. Thus Kepler[5], in his "Harmonics of the World," asserts a "*formatrix facultas*, which has its seat in the entrails of the earth, and, after the manner of a pregnant woman, expresses the five regular geometrical solids in the forms of gems." But philosophers, in the course of time, rested more upon observation, and less upon abstract reasonings. Nicolas Steno, a Dane, published in 1669, a dissertation "De Solido intra Solidum Naturaliter contento," in which he says[6], that though the sides of the hexagonal crystal may vary, *the angles are not changed.* And Dominic

[5] Linz. 1619, p. 161.

[6] p. 69.

Gulielmini, in a "Dissertation on Salts," published in 1707, says[7], in a true inductive spirit, "Nature does not employ all figures, but only certain ones of those which are possible; and of these, the determination is not to be fetched from the brain, or proved *à priori*, but obtained by experiments and observations." And he speaks[8] with entire decision on this subject: "Nevertheless since there is here a principle of crystallization, the inclination of the planes and of the angles is always constant." He even anticipates, very nearly, the views of later crystallographers as to the mode in which crystals are formed from elementary molecules. From this time, many persons laboured and speculated on this subject; as Cappeller, whose "Prodromus Crystallographiæ" appeared at Lucern in 1723; Bourguet, who published "Lettres Philosophiques sur la Formation de Sels et de Cristaux," at Amsterdam in 1729; and Henckel, the "Physicus" of the elector of Saxony, whose "Pyritologia" came forth in 1725. In this last work we have an example of the description of the various forms of special classes of minerals, (iron, copper, and arsenic, pyrites;) and an example of the enthusiasm which this apparently dry and laborious study can excite: "Neither tongue nor stone," he exclaims[9], "can express the satisfaction which I received on setting eyes upon this sinter covered with galena; and thus it constantly happens, that one must have more pleasure

[7] p. 19. [8] p. 83. [9] p. 343.

in what seems worthless rubbish, than in the purest and most precious ores, if we know aught of minerals."

Still, however, Henckel[10] disclaims the intention of arranging minerals according to their mathematical forms; and this, which may be considered as the first decided step in the formation of crystallographic mineralogy, appears to have been first attempted by Linnæus. In this attempt, however, he was by no means happy; nor does he himself appear to have been satisfied. He begins his preface by saying, "Lithology is not what I plume myself upon." (*Lithologia mihi cristas non eriget.*) Though his sagacity, as a natural historian, led him to see that crystalline form was one of the most definite, and therefore most important, characters of minerals, he failed in profiting by this thought, because in applying it he did not employ the light of geometry, but was regulated by what appeared to him resemblances, arbitrarily selected, and often delusive[11]. Thus he derived the form of pyrites from that of vitriol[12]; and brought together alum and diamond on account of their common octohedral form. But he had the great merit of animating to this study one to whom, more perhaps than to any other person, it owes its subsequent progress; I mean Romé de Lisle. "Instructed," this writer says, in his preface to his "Essais de Cristallographie," "by the works of the celebrated Von Linnée, how

[10] p. 167 [11] Marx. Gesch. p. 97. [12] Syst. Nat. vi. p. 220.

greatly the study of the angular forms of crystals might become interesting, and fitted to extend the sphere of our mineralogical knowledge, I have followed them in all their metamorphoses with the most scrupulous attention." The views of Linnæus, as to the importance of this character, had indeed been adopted by several others; as John Hill, the king's gardener at Kensington, who, in 1777, published his "Spathogenesia;" and Grignon, who, in 1775, says, "These crystallizations may give the means of finding a new theory of the generation of crystalline gems."

The circumstance which threw so much difficulty in the way of those who tried to follow out this thought was, that in consequence of the apparent irregularity of crystals, arising from the extension or contraction of particular sides of the figure, each kind of substance may really appear under many different forms, connected with each other by certain geometrical relations. These may be conceived by considering a certain fundamental form to be cut into new forms in particular ways. Thus if we take a cube, and cut off all the eight corners, till the original faces disappear, we make it an octohedron; and if we stop short of this, we have a figure of fourteen faces, which has been called a *cubo-octohedron.* The first person who appears distinctly to have conceived this *truncation* of angles and edges, and to have introduced the word, is Démeste[13];

[13] Lettres, 1779, i. 48.

although Wallerius[14] had already said, in speaking of the various crystalline forms of calcspar, "I conceive it would be better not to attend to all differences, lest we be overwhelmed by the number." And Werner, in his celebrated work "On the External Characters of Minerals[15]," had formally spoken of *truncation*, *acuation*, and *acumination*, or replacement by a plane, an edge, a point, respectively, (*abstumpfung*, *zuschärfung*, *zuspitzung*,) as ways in which the forms of crystals are modified and often disguised. He applied this process in particular to show the connexion of the various forms which are related to the cube. But still the extension of the process to the whole range of minerals and other crystalline bodies, was due to Romé de Lisle.

[14] Systema Mineralogicum, 1772-5, i. 143.
[15] Leipzig, 1774.

CHAPTER II.

Epoch of Romé de Lisle and Haüy.—Establishment of the Fixity of Crystalline Angles, and the Simplicity of the Laws of Derivation.

We have already seen that, before 1780, several mineralogists had recognised the constancy of the angles of crystals, and had seen (as Démeste and Werner,) that the forms were subject to modifications of a definite kind. But neither of these two thoughts was so apprehended or so developed, as to supersede the occasion for a discoverer who should put forward these principles as what they really were, the materials of a new and complete science. The merit of this step belongs jointly to Romé de Lisle and to Haüy. The former of these two men had already, in 1772, published an *Essai de Cristallographie*, in which he had described a number of crystals. But in this work his views are still rude and vague; he does not establish any connected sequence of transitions in each kind of substance, and lays little or no stress on the angles. But in 1783, his ideas[1] had reached a maturity which, by comparison, excites our admiration. In this he asserts, in the most distinct manner, the *invariability*

[1] Cristallographie, ou Déscription de Formes propres à tous les Corps du Règne Minéral. 3 vols. and 1 vol. of plates.

of the angles of crystals of each kind, under all the changes of relative dimension which the faces may undergo[2]; and he points out that this invariability applies only to the *primitive forms*, from each of which many secondary forms are derived by various changes[3]. Thus we cannot deny him the merit of having taken steady hold on both the handles of this discovery, though something still remained for another to do. Romé pursues his general ideas into detail with great labour and skill. He gives drawings of more than five hundred regular forms; (in his first work he had inserted only one hundred and ten; Linnæus only knew forty;) and assigns them to their proper substances; for instance, thirty to calcspar, and sixteen to felspar. He also invented and used a goniometer. We cannot doubt that he would have been looked upon as a great discoverer, if his fame had not been dimmed by the more brilliant success of his contemporary Haüy.

Réné-Just Haüy is rightly looked upon as the founder of the modern school of crystallography; for all those who have, since him, pursued the study with success, have taken his views for their basis. Besides publishing a system of crystallography and of mineralogy, far more complete than any which had yet appeared, the peculiar steps in the advance which belong to him are, the discovery of the importance of *cleavage*, and the consequent expression of the laws of deviation of secondary from primary

[2] p. 68. [3] p. 73.

forms, by means of the *decrements* of the successive layers of *integrant molecules*.

The latter of these discoveries had already been, in some measure, anticipated by Bergman, who had, in 1773, conceived a hexagonal prism to be built up by the juxta-position of solid rhombs on the planes of a rhombic nucleus[4]. It is not clear[5] whether Haüy was acquainted with Bergman's Memoir, at the time when the cleavage of a hexagonal prism of calcspar, accidentally obtained, led him to the same conception of its structure. But however this might be, he had the indisputable credit of following out this conception with all the vigour of originality, and with the most laborious and persevering earnestness; indeed he made it the business of his life. The hypothesis of a solid, built up of small solids, had this peculiar advantage in reference to crystallography; it rendered a reason of this curious fact;—that certain forms occur in crystals of the same kind, while other forms, apparently intermediate between those which actually occur, are rigorously excluded. The doctrine of decrements explained this; for by placing a number of regularly-decreasing rows of equal solids, as, for instance, bricks, upon one another, we might form a regular equal-sided triangle, as the gable of a house; and if the breadth of the gable were one hundred bricks, the height of the triangle might be one hundred, or fifty,

[4] De Formis Crystallorum. Nov. Act. Reg. Soc. Sc. Ups. 1773.

[5] Traité de Minér. 1822. i. 15.

or twenty-five; but it would be found that if the height were an intermediate number, as fifty-seven, or forty-three, the edge of the wall would become irregular; and such irregularity is assumed to be inadmissible in the regular structure of crystals. Thus this mode of conceiving crystals allows of certain definite secondary forms, and no others.

The mathematical deduction of the dimensions and proportions of these secondary forms;—the invention of a notation to express them;—the examination of the whole mineral kingdom in accordance with these views;—the production of a work[6] in which they are explained with singular clearness and vivacity;—are services by which Haüy richly earned the admiration which has been bestowed upon him. The wonderful copiousness and variety of the forms and laws to which he was led, thoroughly exercised and nourished the spirit of deduction and calculation which his discoveries excited in him. The reader may form some conception of the extent of his labours, by being told—that the mere geometrical propositions which he found it necessary to premise to his special descriptions, occupy a volume and a half of his work;—that his diagrams are nearly a thousand in number;—that in one single substance (calcspar), he has described forty-seven varieties of form;—and that he has described one kind of crystal (called by him *fer sulfuré parallélique*) which has one hundred and thirty-four faces.

[6] Traité de Minéralogie, 1801, 5 vols.

In the course of a long life, he examined, with considerable care, all the forms he could procure of all kinds of mineral; and the interpretation which he gave of the laws of those forms was, in many cases, fixed, by means of a name applied to the mineral in which the form occurred; thus, he introduced such names as *équiaxe*, *métastatique*, *unibinaire*, *perihexahédral*, *bisalterne*, and others. It is not desirable to apply separate names to the different forms of the same mineral species, but these terms answered the purpose, at the time, of making the subjects of study more definite. A symbolical notation is the more convenient mode of designating such forms, and such a notation Haüy invented; but the symbols devised by him had many inconveniences, and have since been superseded by the systems of other crystallographers.

Another of his leading merits was, as we have already intimated, to have shown, more clearly than his predecessors had done, that the crystalline angles of substances are a criterion of the substances; and that this is peculiarly true of the *angles of cleavage*;—that is, the angles of those edges which are obtained by cleaving a crystal in two different directions;—a mode of division which the structure of many kinds of crystals allowed him to execute in the most complete manner. As an instance of the employment of this criterion, I may mention his separation of the sulphates of baryta and of strontia, which had previously been confounded. Among crystals which in the collections were ranked together as "heavy spar,"

and which were so perfect as to admit of accurate measurement, he found that those which were brought from Sicily, and those of Derbyshire, differed in their cleavage angle by three degrees and a half. "I could not suppose," he says[7], "that this difference was the effect of any law of decrement; for it would have been necessary to suppose so rapid and complex a law, that such an hypothesis might have been justly regarded as an abuse of the theory." He was, therefore, in great perplexity. But a little while previous to this, Klaproth had discovered that there is an earth which, though in many respects it resembles baryta, is different from it in others; and this earth, from the place where it was found (in Scotland) had been named *Strontia*. The French chemists had ascertained that the two earths had, in some cases, been mixed or confounded; and Vauquelin, on examining the Sicilian crystals, found that their base was strontia, and not, as in the Derbyshire ones, baryta. The riddle was now read; all the crystals with the larger angle belonged to the one, all those with the smaller, to the other, of these two sulphates; and crystallometry was clearly recognised as an authorized test of the difference of substances which nearly resemble each other.

Enough has been said, probably, to enable the reader to judge how much each of the two persons, now under review, contributed to crystallography. It would be unwise to compare such contributions to science with the great discoveries of astronomy

[7] Traité, ii. 320.

and chemistry; and we have seen how nearly the predecessors of Romé and Haüy had reached the point of knowledge on which they took their stand! But yet it is impossible not to allow, that in these discoveries, which thus gave form and substance to the science of crystallography, we have a manifestation of no common sagacity and skill. Here, as in other discoveries, were required ideas and facts;—clearness of geometrical conception which could deal with the most complex relations of form; a minute and extensive acquaintance with actual crystals; and the talent and habit of referring these facts to the general ideas. Haüy, in particular, was happily endowed for his task. Without being a great mathematician, he was sufficently a geometer to solve all the problems which his undertaking demanded; and though the mathematical reasoning might have been made more compendious, by one who was more at home in mathematical generalisation, probably this could hardly have been done without making the subject less accessible and less attractive to persons moderately disciplined in mathematics. In all his reasonings upon particular cases, Haüy is acute and clear; while his general views appear to be suggested rather by a lively fancy than by a sage inductive spirit: and though he thus misses the character of a great philosopher, the vivacity of style, and felicity and happiness of illustration, which grace his book, and which agree well with the character of an Abbé of the old French monarchy, had a great and useful influence on the progress of the subject.

Unfortunately Romé de Lisle and Haüy were not only rivals, but in some measure enemies. The former might naturally feel some vexation at finding himself, in his later years (he died in 1790), thrown into shade by his more brilliant successor. In reference to Haüy's use of cleavage, he speaks[8] of "innovators in crystallography, who may properly be called *crystalloclasts*." Yet he adopted, in great measure, the same views of the formation of crystals by lamina[9], which Haüy illustrated by the destructive process at which he thus sneers. His sensitiveness was kept alive by the conduct of the Academy of Sciences, which took no notice of him and his labours[10]; probably because it was led by Buffon, who disliked Linnæus, and might dislike Romé as his follower; and who, as we have seen, despised crystallography. Haüy revenged himself by rarely mentioning Romé in his works, though it was manifest that his obligations to him were immense; and by recording his errors while he corrected them. More fortunate than his rival, Haüy was, from the first, received with favour and applause. His lectures at Paris were eagerly listened to by persons from all quarters of the world. His views were, in this manner, speedily diffused; and the subject was soon pursued, in various ways, by mathematicians and mineralogists in every country of Europe.

[8] Pref., p. xxvii. [9] T. ii. p. 21. [10] Marx. 130.

CHAPTER III.

Reception and Corrections of the Hauïan Crystallography.

I have not hitherto noticed the imperfections of the crystallographic views and methods of Haüy, because my business in the last section was to mark the permanent additions he made to the science. His system did, however, require completion and rectification in various points; and in speaking of the crystallographers of the subsequent time, who may all be considered as the cultivators of the Hauïan doctrines, we must also consider what they did in correcting them.

The three main points in which this improvement was needed were;—a better determination of the crystalline forms of the special substances;—a more general and less arbitrary method of considering crystalline forms according to their symmetry;—and a detection of more general conditions by which the crystalline angle is regulated. The first of these processes may be considered as the natural sequel of the Hauïan epoch: the other two must be treated as separate steps of discovery.

When it appeared that the angle of natural or of cleavage faces could be used to determine the differences of minerals, it became important to measure this angle with accuracy. Haüy's measurements were found very inaccurate by many succeeding

crystallographers; Mohs says[1] that they are so generally inaccurate, that no confidence can be placed in them. This was said, of course, according to the more rigorous notions of accuracy to which the establishment of Haüy's system led. Among the persons who principally laboured in ascertaining, with precision, the crystalline angles of minerals, were several Englishmen, especially Wollaston, Phillips, and Brooke. Wollaston, by the invention of his goniometer, placed an entirely new degree of accuracy within the reach of the crystallographer; the angle of two faces being, in this instrument, measured by means of the reflected images of bright objects seen in them, so that the measure is the more accurate the more minute the faces are. In the use of this instrument, no one was more laborious and successful than William Phillips, whose power of apprehending the most complex forms with steadiness and clearness, led Wollaston to say that he had "a geometrical sense." Phillips published a Treatise on Mineralogy, containing a great collection of such determinations; and Mr. Brooke, a crystallographer of the same exact and careful school, has also published several works of the same kind. The precise measurement of crystalline angles must be the familiar employment of all who study crystallography; and, therefore, any further enumeration of those who have added, in this way, to the stock of knowledge, would be superfluous.

Nor need I dwell long on those who added to the

[1] Marx. p. 153.

knowledge which Haüy left, of derived forms. The most remarkable work of this kind was that of Count Bournon, who published a work on a single mineral (calcspar) in three quarto volumes[8]. He has here given representations of seven hundred forms of crystals, of which, however, only fifty-six are essentially different. From this example the reader may judge what a length of time, and what a number of observers and calculators, were requisite to exhaust the subject.

If the calculations, thus occasioned, had been conducted upon the basis of Haüy's system, without any further generalisation, they would have belonged to that process, the natural sequel of inductive discoveries, which we call *deduction;* and would have needed only a very brief notice here. But some additional steps were made in the upward road to scientific truth, and of these we must now give an account.

[8] Traité complet de la Chaux Carbonatée et d'Aragonite, par M. le Comte de Bournon. London, 1808.

CHAPTER IV.

Establishment of the Distinction of Systems of Crystallization.—Weiss and Mohs.

In Haüy's views, as generally happens in new systems, however true, there was involved something that was arbitrary, something that was false or doubtful, and something that was unnecessarily limited. The principal points of this kind were;—his having made the laws of crystalline derivation depend so much upon cleavage;—his having assumed an atomic constitution of bodies as an essential part of his system;—and his having taken a set of primary forms, which, being selected by no general view, were partly superfluous, and partly defective.

How far evidence, such as has been referred to by various philosophers, has proved, or can prove, that bodies are constituted of indivisible atoms, will be more fully examined in the work which treats of the Philosophy of this subject. There can be little doubt that the portion of Haüy's doctrine which most riveted popular attention and applause, was his dissection of crystals, in a manner which was supposed to lead actually to their ultimate material elements. Yet it is clear, that since the solids given by cleavage are, in many cases, such as cannot make up a solid space, the primary conception, of a necessary geometrical identity between the results of

division, and the elements of composition, which is the sole foundation of the supposition that crystallography points out the actual elements, disappears on being scrutinized: and when Haüy, pressed by this difficulty, as in the case of fluor-spar, put his integrant octohedral molecules together, touching by the edges only, his method became an empty geometrical diagram, with no physical meaning.

The real fact, divested of the hypothesis, which was contained in the fiction of decrements, was, that when the relation of the derivative to the primary faces is expressed by means of numerical indices, these numbers are integers, and generally very small ones; and this was the form which the law gradually assumed, as the method of derivation was made more general and simple by Weiss and others.

"When, in 1809, I published my Dissertation," says Weiss[1], "I shared the common opinion as to the necessity of the assumption and the reality of the existence of a primitive form, at least in a sense not very different from the usual sense of the expression. While I sought," he adds, referring to certain doctrines of general philosophy which he and others entertained, "a *dynamical* ground for this, instead of the untenable atomistic view, I found that, out of my primitive forms, there was gradually unfolded to my hands, that which really governs them, and is not affected by their casual fluctuations, the fundamental relations of those Dimensions according to which a multiplicity of internal oppositions, necessarily

[1] Acad. Berl. 1816, p. 307.

and mutually interdependent, are developed in the mass, each having its own polarity; so that the crystalline character is co-extensive with these polarities."

The "Dimensions" of which Weiss here speaks, are the *Axes of Symmetry* of the crystal; that is, those lines, in reference to which, every face is accompanied by other faces, having the same positions and properties. Thus a rhomb, or more properly a *rhombohedron*[2], of calc-spar may be placed with one of its obtuse corners uppermost, so that all the three faces which meet there are equally inclined to the vertical line. In this position, every derivative face, which is obtained by any modification of the faces or edges of the rhombohedron, implies either three or six such derivative faces; for no one of the three upper faces of the rhombohedron has any character or property different from the other two; and, therefore, there is no reason for the existence of a derivative from one of these primitive faces, which does not equally hold for the other primitive faces. Hence the derivative forms will, in all cases, contain none but faces connected by this kind of correspondence. The axis thus made vertical will be an Axis of Symmetry, and the crystal will consist of three divisions, ranged round this axis, and exactly resembling each other. According to Weiss's nomenclature, such a crystal is "three-and-three-membered."

But this is only one of the kinds of symmetry

[2] I use this name for the solid figure, since *rhomb* has always been used for a plane figure.

which crystalline forms may exhibit. They may have *three axes* of complete and *equal* symmetry at right angles to each other, as the cube and the regular octohedron;—or, *two axes* of equal symmetry, perpendicular to each other and to a *third axis*, which is not affected with the same symmetry with which they are; such a figure is a square pyramid;—or they may have *three* rectangular *axes*, all of *unequal* symmetry, the modifications referring to each axis separately from the other two.

These are essential and necessary distinctions of crystalline form; and the introduction of a classification of forms founded on such relations, or as they were called, *Systems of Crystallization*, was a great improvement upon the divisions of the earlier crystallographers, which were separated according to certain arbitrarily-assumed primary forms. Thus Romé de Lisle's fundamental forms were, the tetrahedron, the cube, the octohedron, the rhombic prism, the rhombic octohedron, the dodecahedron with triangular faces; Haüy's primary forms are the cube, the rhombohedron, the oblique rhombic prism, the right rhombic prism, the rhombic dodecahedron, the regular octohedron, tetrahedron, and six-sided prism, and the bipyramidal dodecahedron. This division, as I have already said, errs both by excess and defect, for some of these primary forms might be made derivatives from others; and no solid reason could be assigned why they were not. Thus the cube may be derived from the tetrahedron, by truncating the edges; and the rhombic dodecahedron again from the cube, by

truncating its edges; while the square pyramid could not be legitimately identified with the derivative of any of these forms; for if we were to derive it from the rhombic prism, why should the acute angles always suffer decrements corresponding in a certain way to those of the obtuse angles, as they must do in order to give rise to a square pyramid?

The introduction of the method of reference to Systems of Crystallization has been a subject of controversy, some ascribing this valuable step to Weiss, and some to Mohs[3]. It appears, I think, on the whole, that Weiss first published works in which the method is employed; but that Mohs, by applying it to all the known species of minerals, has had the merit of making it the basis of real crystallography. Weiss, in 1809, published a Dissertation *On the mode of investigating the principal geometrical character of crystalline forms*, in which he says[4], "No part, line, or quantity, is so important as the axis; no consideration is more essential or of a higher order than the relation of a crystalline plane to the axis;" and again, "An axis is any line governing the figure, about which all parts are similarly disposed, and with reference to which they correspond mutually." This he soon followed out by examination of some difficult cases, as Felspar and Epidote. In the Memoirs of the Berlin Academy[5], for 1814-5, he published *An Exhibition of the natural Divisions of Systems of*

[3] Edinb. Phil. Trans. 1823, vols. xv. and xvi.

[4] p. 16, 42.

[5] p. 290—336.

Crystallization. In this Memoir, his divisions are as follows:—The *regular* system, the *four-membered*, the *two-and-two-membered*, the *three-and-three-membered*, and some others of inferior degrees of symmetry. These divisions are by Mohs (*Outlines of Mineralogy*, 1822,) termed the *tessular*, *pyramidal*, *prismatic*, and *rhombohedral* systems respectively. Hausmann, in his *Investigations concerning the Forms of inanimate Nature*[6], makes a nearly corresponding arrangement;—the *isometric*, *monodimetric*, *trimetric*, and *monotrimetric*; and one or other of these sets of terms have been adopted by most succeeding writers.

In order to make the distinctions more apparent, I have purposely omitted to speak of the systems which arise when the *prismatic* system loses some part of its symmetry;—when it has only half or a quarter its complete number of faces;—or, according to Mohs's phraseology, when it is *hemihedral* or *tetartohedral*. Such systems are represented by the singly-oblique or doubly-oblique prism; they are termed by Weiss *two-and-one membered*, and *one-and-one membered*; by other writers, *Monoklinometric*, and *Triklinometric* Systems. There are also other peculiarities of Symmetry, such, for instance, as that of the *plagihedral* faces of quartz, and other minerals.

The introduction of an arrangement of crystalline forms into systems, according to their degree of symmetry, was a step which was rather founded on

[6] Göttingen, 1821.

a distinct and comprehensive perception of mathematical relations, than on an acquaintance with experimental facts, beyond what earlier mineralogists had possessed. This arrangement was, however, remarkably confirmed by some of the properties of minerals which attracted notice about the time now spoken of, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

Reception and Confirmation of the Distinction of Systems of Crystallization.

Diffusion of the Distinction of Systems.—The distinction of systems of crystallization was so far founded on obviously true views, that it was speedily adopted by most mineralogists. I need not dwell on the steps by which this took place. Mr. Haidinger's translation of Mohs was a principal occasion of its introduction in England. As an indication of dates, bearing on this subject, perhaps I may be allowed to notice, that there appeared in the Philosophical Transactions for 1825, *A General Method of Calculating the Angles of Crystals*, which I had written, and in which I referred only to Haüy's views; but that in 1826[1], I published a Memoir *on the Classification of Crystalline Combinations*, founded on the methods of Weiss and Mohs, especially the latter; with which I had in the mean time become acquainted, and which appeared to me to contain their own evidence and recommendation. General methods, such as was attempted in the Memoir just quoted, are part of that process in the history of sciences, by which, when the principles are once established,

[1] Camb. Trans. vol. ii. p. 391.

the mathematical operation of deducing their consequences is made more and more general and symmetrical: which we have seen already exemplified in the history of celestial mechanics after the time of Newton. It does not enter into our plan, to dwell upon the various steps in this way made by Levy, Naumann, Grassman, Kupffer, Hessel, and by Professor Miller among ourselves. I may notice that one great improvement was, the method introduced by Monteiro and Levy, of determining the laws of derivation of forces by means of the *parallelisms of edges;* which was afterwards extended so that faces were considered as belonging to *zones.* Nor need I attempt to enumerate (what indeed it would be difficult to describe in words) the various methods of *notation* by which it has been proposed to represent the faces of crystals, and to facilitate the calculations which have reference to them.

Confirmation of the Distinction of Systems by the Optical Properties of Minerals.—Brewster.—I must not omit to notice the striking confirmation which the distinction of systems of crystallization received from optical discoveries, especially those of Brewster. Of the history of this very rich and beautiful department of science, we have already given some account, in speaking of optics. The first facts which were noticed, those relating to double refraction, belonged exclusively to crystals of the rhombohedral system. The splendid phenomena of the

rings and lemniscates produced by dipolarizing crystals, were afterwards discovered; and these were, in 1817, classified by Sir David Brewster, according to the crystalline forms to which they belong. This classification, on comparison with the distinction of Systems of Crystallization, resolved itself into a necessary relation of mathematical symmetry: all crystals of the pyramidal and rhombohedral systems, which from their geometrical character have a single axis of symmetry, are also optically uniaxal, and produce by dipolarization circular rings; while the prismatic system, which has no such single axis, but three unequal axes of symmetry, is optically biaxal, gives lemniscates by dipolarized light, and, according to Fresnel's theory, has three rectangular axes of unequal elasticity.

Many other most curious trains of research have confirmed the general truth, that the degree and kind of geometrical symmetry corresponds exactly with the symmetry of the optical properties. As an instance of this, eminently striking for its singularity, we may notice the discovery of Sir John Herschel, that the *plagihedral* crystallization of quartz, by which it exhibits faces *twisted* to the right or the left, is accompanied by right or left-handed circular polarization respectively. No one acquainted with the subject can now doubt, that the correspondence of geometrical and optical symmetry is of the most complete and fundamental kind.

Thus the highest generalisations at which mathematical crystallographers have yet arrived, may be considered as fully established; and the science, in the condition in which these place it, is fit to be employed as one of the members of mineralogy, and thus to fill its appropriate place and office.

CHAPTER VI.

CORRECTION OF THE LAW OF THE SAME ANGLE FOR THE SAME SUBSTANCE.

Discovery of Isomorphism. Mitscherlich.—The discovery of which we now have to speak may appear at first sight too large to be included in the history of crystallography, and may seem to belong rather to chemistry. But it is to be recollected that crystallography, from the time of its first assuming importance in the hands of Haüy, founded its claim to notice entirely upon its connexion with chemistry; crystalline forms were properties of *something;* but *what* that something was, and how it might be modified without becoming something else, no crystallographer could venture to decide, without the aid of chemical analysis. Haüy had assumed, as the general result of his researches, that the same chemical elements, combined in the same proportions, would always exhibit the same crystalline form; and reciprocally, that the same form and angles (except in the obvious case of the tessular system,) implied the same chemical constitution. But this dogma could only be considered as an approximate conjecture; for there were many glaring and unexplained exceptions to it. The explanation of several of these was beautifully supplied by the discovery that there are various elements which are *isomorphous* to each

other; that is, such that one may take the place of another without altering the crystalline form; and thus the chemical composition may be much changed, while the crystallographic character is undisturbed.

This truth had been caught sight of, probably as a guess only, by Fuchs as early as 1815. In speaking of a mineral which had been called Gehlenite, he says, "I hold the oxide of iron, not for an essential component part of this genus, but only as a *vicarious* element, replacing so much lime. We shall find it necessary to consider the results of several analyses of mineral bodies in this point of view, if we wish, on the one hand, to bring them into agreement with the doctrine of chemical proportions, and on the other, to avoid unnecessarily splitting up genera." In a lecture "On the Mutual Influence of Chemistry and Mineralogy[1]," he again draws attention to his term *vicarious* (*vicarirende*,) which undoubtedly expresses the nature of the general law afterwards established by Mitscherlich in 1822.

Yet we are not to suppose that, after this anticipation of Fuchs, the step made by Mitscherlich was obvious or unimportant. Till many careful analyses had given substance and signification to this conception of vicarious elements, it was of small value. Perhaps no one was more capable than Berzelius of turning to the best advantage any ideas which were current in the chemical world; yet we find him[2] in

[1] Munich, 1820.

[2] Essay on the Theory of Chemical Proportions, p. 122.

1820, dwelling upon a certain vague view of these cases,—that "oxides which contain equal doses of oxygen must have their general properties common;" without tracing it to any definite conclusions. But his scholar, Mitscherlich, gave this proposition a real crystallographical import. Thus he found that the carbonates of lime (calc-spar,) of magnesia, of protoxide of iron, and of protoxide of manganese, agree in many respects of form, while the homologous angles vary through one or two degrees only; so again the carbonates of baryta, strontia, lead, and lime (arragonite), agree nearly; the different kinds of felspar vary only by the substitution of one alkali for another; the phosphates are almost identical with the arseniates of several bases. These, and similar results, were expressed by saying that, in such cases, the bases, lime, protoxide of iron, and the rest, are *isomorphous;* or in the latter instance, that the arsenic and phosphoric acids are isomorphous.

Since, in some of these cases, the substitution of one element of the isomorphous group for another does alter the angle, though slightly, it has since been proposed to call such groups *plesiomorphous.*

This discovery of isomorphism was of great importance, and excited much attention among the chemists of Europe. The history of its reception, however, belongs, in part, to the classification of minerals; for its effect was immediately to metamorphose the existing chemical systems of arrangement. But even those crystallographers and chemists who cared little for general systems of classifi-

cation, received a powerful impulse by the expectation, which was now excited, of discovering definite laws connecting chemical constitution with crystalline form. Such investigations were soon carried on with great activity. Thus at a recent period, Ampech analyzed a number of tessular minerals, spinelle, pleonaste, gahnite, franklinite, and chromic iron oxide; and seems to have had some success in giving a common type to their chemical formulæ, as there is a common type in their crystallization.

Dimorphism.—My business is, to point out the connected truths which have been obtained by philosophers, rather than insulated difficulties which still stand out to perplex them. I need not, therefore, dwell on the curious cases of *dimorphism*; cases in which the same definite chemical compound of the same elements appears to have two different forms; thus the carbonate of lime has two forms, *calc-spar* and *arragonite*, which belong to different systems of crystallization. Such facts may puzzle us; but they hardly interfere with any received general truths, because we have as yet no truths of very high order respecting the connexion of chemical constitution and crystalline form. Dimorphism does not interfere with isomorphism; the two classes of facts stand at the same stage of inductive generalization, and we wait for some higher truth which shall include both, and rise above them.

CHAPTER VII.

Attempts to Establish the Fixity of other Physical Properties.—Werner.

The reflections from which it appeared, (p. 183 of this volume,) that in order to obtain general knowledge respecting bodies, we must give scientific fixity to our appreciation of their properties, applies to their other properties as well as to their crystalline form. And though none of the other properties have yet been referred to standards so definite as that which geometry supplies for crystals, a system has been introduced which makes their measures far more constant and precise than they are to a common undisciplined sense.

The author of this system was Abraham Gottlob Werner, who had been educated in the institutions which the elector of Saxony had established at the mines of Freiberg. Of an exact and methodical intellect, and of great acuteness of the senses, Werner was well fitted for the task of giving fixity to the appreciation of outward impressions; and this he attempted in his "Dissertation on the External Characters of Fossils," which was published at Leipzig in 1774. Of the precision of his estimation of such characters, we may judge from the following story, told by his biographer Frisch[1]. One

[1] Werner's Leben, p. 26.

of his companions had received a quantity of pieces of amber, and was relating to Werner, then very young, that he had found in the lot one piece from which he could extract no signs of electricity. Werner requested to be allowed to put his hand in the bag which contained these pieces, and immediately drew out the unelectrical piece. It was yellow chalcedony, which is distinguishable from amber by its weight and coldness.

The principal external characters which were subjected by Werner to a systematic examination, were colour, lustre, hardness, and specific gravity. His subdivisions of the first character (*colour*,) were very numerous; yet it cannot be doubted that if we recollect them by the eye, and not by their names, they are definite and valuable characters, and especially the metallic colours. Breithaupt, merely by the aid of this character, distinguished two new compounds among the small grains found along with the grains of platinum, and usually confounded with them. The kinds of *lustre*, namely, *glassy*, *fatty*, *adamantine*, *metallic*, are, when used in the same manner, equally valuable. *Specific gravity* obviously admits of a numerical measure; and the *hardness* of a mineral was pretty exactly defined by the substances which it would scratch, and by which it was capable of being scratched.

Werner soon acquired a reputation as a mineralogist, which drew persons from every part of Europe to Freiberg in order to hear his lectures; and thus diffused very widely his mode of employing external

characters. It was, indeed, impossible to attend so closely to these characters as the Wernerian method required, without finding that they were more distinctive than might at first sight be imagined; and the analogy which this mode of studying mineralogy established between that and other branches of natural history, recommended the method to those in whom a general inclination to such studies was excited. Thus Professor Jameson of Edinburgh, who had been one of the pupils of Werner at Freiberg, not only published works in which he promulgated the mineralogical doctrines of his master, but established in Edinburgh a "Wernerian Society," having for its object the general cultivation of natural history.

Werner's standards and nomenclature of external characters were somewhat modified by Mohs, who, with the same kind of talents and views, succeeded him at Freiberg. Mohs reduced hardness to numerical measure by selecting ten known minerals, each harder than the other in order, from *talc* to *corundum* and *diamond*, and by making the place which these minerals occupy in the list, the numerical measure of the hardness of those which are compared with them. The result of the application of this fixed measurement and nomenclature of external characters will appear in the History of Classification, to which we now proceed.

SYSTEMATIC MINERALOGY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Attempts at the Classification of Minerals.

Sect. 1.—*Proper object of Classification.*

The fixity of the crystalline and other physical properties of minerals is turned to account by being made the means of classifying such objects. To use the language of Aristotle[1], Classification is the *architectonic* science, to which Crystallography and the Doctrine of External Characters are subordinate and ministerial, as the art of the bricklayer and carpenter are to that of the architect. But classification itself is useful only as subservient to an ulterior science, which shall furnish us with knowledge concerning things so classified. To classify is to divide and to name; and the value of the divisions which we thus make, and of the names which we give them, is this;—that they render exact knowledge and general propositions possible. Now the knowledge which we principally seek concerning minerals is a knowledge of their chemical composition; the general propositions to which we hope to be led are

[1] Eth. Nicom. i. 2.

such as assert relations between their intimate constitution and their external attributes. Thus our mineralogical classification must always have an eye turned towards chemistry. We cannot get rid of the fundamental conviction, that the elementary composition of bodies, since it fixes their essence, must determine their properties. Hence all mineralogical arrangements, whether they profess it or not, must be, in effect, chemical; they must have it for their object to bring into view a set of relations, which, whatever else they may be, are at least chemical relations. We may begin with the outside, but it is only in order to reach the inner structure. We may classify without reference to chemistry; but if we do so, it is only that we may assert chemical propositions with reference to our classification.

But, as we have already attempted to show, we not only may, but we *must* classify, by other than chemical characters, in order to be able to make our classification the basis of chemical knowledge. In order to assert chemical truths concerning bodies, we must have the bodies known by some tests not chemical. The chemist cannot assert that arragonite does or does not contain strontia, except the mineralogist can tell him whether any given specimen is or is not arragonite. If chemistry be called upon to supply the definitions as well as the doctrines of mineralogy, the science can only consist of identical propositions.

Yet chemistry has been much employed in mineralogical classifications, and, it is generally

believed, with advantage to the science: How is this consistent with what has been said?

To this the answer is, that when this *has* been done with advantage, the authority of external characters, as well as of chemical constitution, has been brought into play. We have two sets of properties to compare, chemical and physical; to exhibit the connexion of these is the object of scientific mineralogy. And though this connexion would be most distinctly asserted, if we could keep the two sets of properties distinct, yet it may be brought into view in a great degree, by classifications in which both are referred to as guides. Since the governing principle of the attempts at classification is the conviction that the chemical constitution and the physical properties have a definite relation to each other, we appear entitled to use both kinds of evidence, in proportion as we can best obtain each; and the general consistency and convenience of our system will then be the security for its containing substantial knowledge, though this be not presented in a rigorously logical or systematic form.

Such *mixed systems* of classification, resting partly on chemical and partly on physical characters, naturally appeared as the earliest attempts in this way, before the two members of the subject had been clearly separated in men's minds; and these systems, therefore, we must first give an account of.

Sect. 2.—Mixed Systems of Classification.

Early Systems.—The first attempts at classifying minerals went upon the ground of those differences of general aspect which had been recognised in the formation of common language, as *earths*, *stones*, *metals*. But such arrangements were manifestly vague and confused; and when chemistry had advanced to power and honour, her aid was naturally called in to introduce a better order. "Hiarne and Bromell were, as far as I know," says[2] Cronstedt, "the first who founded any mineral system upon chemical principles; to them we owe the three known divisions of the most simple mineral bodies; viz. the *calcarei*, *vitrescentes*, and *apyri*." But Cronstedt's own *Essay towards a System of Mineralogy*, published in Swedish in 1758, had perhaps more influence than any other, upon succeeding systems. In this, the distinction of earths and stones, and also of vitrescent and non-vitrescent earths (*apyri*), is rejected. The earths are classed as *calcareous*, *siliceous*, *argillaceous*, and the like. Again, calcareous earth is pure, (*calc spar*), or united with acid of vitriol (*gypsum*), or united with the muriatic acid (*sal ammoniac*), and the like. It is easy to see that this is the method, which, in its general principle, has been continued to our own time. In such methods, it is supposed that we can recognise the substance by its general appearance, and on this

[2] Mineralogy, Pref. p. viii.

assumption, its place in the system conveys to us chemical knowledge concerning it.

But as the other branches of Natural History, and especially Botany, assumed a systematic form, many mineralogists became dissatisfied with this casual and superficial mode of taking account of external characters; they became convinced, that in mineralogy as in other sciences, classification must have its system and its rules. The views which Werner ascribes to his teacher, Pabst von Ohain[3], show the rise of those opinions which led through Werner to Mohs: "He was of opinion that a natural mineral system must be constructed by chemical determinations, and external characters at the same time (*methodus mixta*); but that along with this, mineralogists ought also to construct and employ what he called an *artificial system*, which might serve us as a guide (*loco indicis*) how to introduce newly-discovered fossils into the system, and how to find easily and quickly those already known and introduced." Such an artificial system containing, not the grounds of classification, but marks for recognition, was afterwards attempted by Mohs, and termed by him the *Characteristic* of his system.

Werner's System.—But, in the mean time, Werner's classification had an extensive reign, and this was still a mixed system. Werner himself, indeed, never published a system of mineralogy. "We might almost imagine," Cuvier says[4], "that when he had produced his nomenclature of external charac-

[3] Frisch, Werner, p. 15. [4] Cuv. El. ii. 314.

ters, he was affrighted with his own creation; and that the reason of his writing so little after this first essay, was to avoid the shackles which he had imposed upon others." His system was, indeed, made known, both in and out of Germany, by his pupils; but, in consequence of Werner's unwillingness to give it on his own authority, it assumed, in its published forms, the appearance of an extorted secret imperfectly told. A *Notice of the Mineralogical Cabinet of Mine-Director Pabst von Ohain*, was, in 1792, published by Karsten and Hoffman, under Werner's direction; and conveyed, by example, his views of mineralogical arrangement; and[5] in 1816 his *Doctrine of Classification* was surreptitiously copied from his manuscript, and published in a German Journal, termed *The Hesperus*. But it was only in 1817, after his death, that there appeared *Werner's Last Mineral System;* edited from his papers by Breithaupt and Köhler: and by this time, as we shall soon see, other systems were coming forwards on the stage.

A very slight notice of Werner's arrangement will suffice to show that it was, as we have termed it, a mixed system. He makes four great Classes of fossils, *Earthy, Saline, Combustible, Metallic;* the earthy fossils are in eight Genera—Diamond, Zircon, Silica, Alumina, Talc, Lime, Baryta, Hallites. It is clear that these genera are in the main chemical, for chemistry alone can definitely distinguish the earths which characterise them. Yet the Wernerian arrangement

[5] Frisch. p. 52.

supposed the distinctions to be practically made by reference to those external characters which the teacher himself could apply with such surpassing skill. And though it cannot be doubted, that the chemical views which prevailed around him had a latent influence on his classifications in some cases, he resolutely refused to bend his system to the authority of chemistry. Thus[e] when he was blamed for having, in opposition to the chemists, placed diamond among the earthy fossils, he persisted in declaring that, mineralogically considered, it was a stone, and could not be treated as anything else.

This was an indication of that tendency, which, under his successor, led to a complete separation of the two grounds of classification. But before we proceed to this, we must notice what was doing at this period in other parts of Europe.

Haüy's System.—Though Werner, on his own principles, ought to have been the first person to see the immense value of the most marked of external characters, crystalline form, he did not, in fact, attach much importance to it. Perhaps he was in some measure fascinated by a fondness for those characters which he had himself systematized, and the study of which did not direct him to look for geometrical relations. However this may be, the glory of giving to crystallography its just importance in mineralogy is due to France; and the Treatise of Haüy, published in 1801, is the basis of the best succeeding works of mineralogy. In this work, the

[e] Frisch. p. 62.

arrangement is professedly chemical; and the classification thus established is employed as the means of enunciating crystallographic and other properties. "The principal object of this Treatise," says the author[7], "is the exposition and developement of a method founded on certain principles, which may serve as a frame-work for all the knowledge which mineralogy can supply, aided by the different sciences which can join hands with her and march on the same line." It is worthy of notice, as characteristic of this period of mixed systems, that the classification of Haüy, though founded on principles so different from the Wernerian ones, deviates little from it in the general character of the divisions. Thus, the first Order of the first Class of Haüy is *Acidiferous Earthy Substances*; the first genus is *Lime*; the species are, *Carbonate of Lime*, *Phosphate of Lime*, *Fluate of Lime*, *Sulphate of Lime*, and so on.

Other Systems.—Such mixed methods were introduced also into this country, and have prevailed, we may say, to the present time. The mineralogy of William Phillips, which was published in 1824, and which was an extraordinary treasure of crystallographic facts, was arranged by such a mixed system; that is, by a system professedly chemical; but, inasmuch as a rigid chemical system is impossible, and the assumption of such a one leads into glaring absurdities, the system was, in this and other attempts of the same kind, corrected by the most arbitrary and lax application of other considerations.

[7] Disc. Prél. p. xvii.

It is a curious example of the difference of national intellectual character, that the manifest inconsistencies of the prevalent systems, which led in Germany, as we shall see, to bold and sweeping attempts at reform, produced in England a sort of contemptuous despair with regard to systems in general;—a belief that no one could be consistent or useful;—and a persuasion that the only valuable knowledge is the accumulation of particular facts. This is not the place to explain how erroneous and unphilosophical such an opinion is. But we may notice that while such a temper prevails among us, our place in this science can never be found in advance of that position which we are now considering as exemplified in the period of Werner and Haüy. So long as we entertain such views respecting the objects of mineralogy, we can have no share in the fortunes of the succeeding period of its history, to which I now proceed.

CHAPTER IX.

ATTEMPTS AT THE REFORM OF MINERALOGICAL SYSTEMS.—SEPARATION OF THE CHEMICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY METHODS.

Sect. 1.—*Natural History System of Mohs.*

THE chemical principle of classification, if pursued at random, as in the cases just spoken of, leads to results at which a philosophical spirit revolts; it separates widely substances which are not distinguishable; joins together bodies the most dissimilar; and in hardly any instance brings any truth into view. The vices of classifications like that of Haüy, could not long be concealed; but even before time had exposed the weakness of his system, Haüy himself had pointed out, clearly and without reserve[1], that a chemical system is only one side of the subject, and supposes, as its counterpart, a science of external characters. In the mean time, the Wernerians were becoming more and more in love with the form which they had given to such a science. Indeed, the expertness which Werner and his scholars acquired in the use of external characters, justified some partiality for them. It is related of him[2], that, by looking at a piece of iron-ore, and poising

[1] See his Disc. Prél. [2] Frisch. Werner's Leben, p. 78.

it in his hand, he was able to tell, almost precisely, the proportion of pure metal which it contained. And in the last year of his life[3], he had marked out, as the employment of the ensuing winter, the study of the system of Berzelius, with a view to find out the laws of combination as disclosed by external characters. In the same spirit, his pupil Breithaupt[4] attempted to discover the ingredients of minerals by their peculiarities of crystallization. The persuasion that there must be *some* connexion between composition and properties, transformed itself, in their minds, into a belief that they could seize the nature of the connexion by a sort of instinct.

This opinion of the independency of the science of external characters, and of its sufficiency for its own object, at last assumed its complete form in the bold attempt to construct a system which should borrow nothing from chemistry. This attempt was made by Frederick Mohs, who had been the pupil of Werner, and was afterwards his successor in the school of Freiberg; and who, by the acute and methodical character of his intellect, and by his intimate knowledge of minerals, was worthy of his predecessor. Rejecting altogether all divisions of which the import was chemical, Mohs turned for guidance, or at least for the light of analogy, to botany. His object was to construct a *Natural System* of mineralogy. What the conditions and advantages of a natural system of any province of nature are, we must delay to explain till we have before us in botany a

[3] Frisch. 3.

[4] Dresdn. Auswahl, vol. ii. p. 97.

more luminous example of such a scheme. But further, in mineralogy, as in botany, besides the natural system, by which we form our classes, it is necessary to have an *Artificial System*, by which we recognise them; —a principle which, we have seen, had already taken root in the school of Freiberg. Such an artificial system Mohs produced in his "Characteristic of the Mineral Kingdom," which was published at Dresden in 1820; and, though extending only to a few pages, excited a strong interest in Germany, where men's minds were prepared to interpret the full import of such a work. Some of the traits of such a "characteristic" had, indeed, been previously drawn by others; as for example, by Haüy, who notices that each of his classes has peculiar characters. For instance, his first class (acidiferous substances,) alone possesses these combinations of properties: —division into a regular octohedron, without being able to scratch glass; specific gravity above 3·5, without being able to scratch glass. The extension of such characters into a scheme which should exhaust the whole mineral kingdom, was the undertaking of Mohs.

Such a collection of marks of classes, implied a classification previously established, and accordingly, Mohs had created his own mineral system. His aim was to create it, as we shall hereafter see that other natural systems are constructed, by taking into account *all* the resemblances and differences of the objects classified. It is obvious that to execute such a work, implied a most intimate and universal

acquaintance with minerals;—a power of combining in one vivid survey the whole mineral kingdom. To illustrate the spirit in which Professor Mohs performed his task, I hope I may be allowed to refer to my own intercourse with him. At an early period of my mineralogical studies, when the very conception of a natural system was new to me, he, with great kindliness of temper, allowed me habitually to propose to him the scruples which arose in my mind, before I could admit principles which appeared to me then so vague and indefinite; and answered my objections with great patience and most instructive clearness. Among other difficulties, I one day propounded to him this;—"You have published a Treatise on Mineralogy, in which you have described *all* the important properties of all known minerals. On your principles, then, it ought to be possible, merely by knowing the descriptions in your book, and without seeing any minerals, to construct a natural system; and this natural system ought to turn out identical with that which you have produced, by so careful an examination of the minerals themselves." He pondered a moment, and then he answered, "It is true; but what an enormous *imagination* (*einbildungskraft, power of inward imagining,*) a man must have for such a work." Vividness of conception of sensible properties, and the steady intuition (*anschauung*) of objects, were deemed by him, and by the Wernerian school in general, to be the most essential conditions of complete knowledge.

It is not necessary to describe Mohs's system in

detail; it may sufficiently indicate its form to state that the following substances, such as I before gave as examples of other arrangements, calcspar, gypsum, fluor spar, apatite, heavy spar, are by Mohs termed respectively, *Rhombohedral Lime Haloide, Gyps Haloide, Octohedral Fluor Haloide, Rhombohedral Fluor Haloide, Prismatic Hal Baryte.* These substances are thus referred to the *Orders* Haloide, and Baryte; to *Genera* Lime Haloide, Fluor Haloide, Hal Baryte; and the *Species* is an additional particularisation.

Mohs not only aimed at framing such a system, but was also ambitious of giving to all minerals names which should accord with the system. This design was too bold to succeed. It is true, that a new nomenclature was much needed in mineralogy: it is true, too, that it was reasonable to expect, from an improved classification, an improved nomenclature, such as had been so happily obtained in botany by the reform of Linnæus. But besides the defects of Mohs's system, he had not prepared his verbal novelties with the temperance and skill of the great botanical reformer. He called upon mineralogists to change the name of almost every mineral with which they were acquainted; and the proposed appellations were mostly of a cumbrous form, as the above examples may serve to show. Such names could have obtained general currency, only after a general and complete acceptance of the system; and the system did not possess, in a sufficient degree, that evidence which alone could gain it a home in the

belief of philosophers;—the coincidence of its results with those of Chemistry. But before I speak finally of the fortunes of the natural-history system, I will say something of the other attempt which was made about the same time to introduce a reform into mineralogy from the opposite extremity of the science.

Sect. 2.—*Chemical System of Berzelius and others.*

If the students of external characters were satisfied of the independence of their method, the chemical analysts were naturally no less confident of the legitimate supremacy of their principles: and when the beginning of the present century had been distinguished by the establishment of the theory of definite proportions, and by discoveries which pointed to the electro-chemical theory, it could not appear presumption to suppose, that the classification of bodies, so far as it depended on chemistry, might be presented in a form more complete and scientific than at any previous time.

The attempt to do this was made by the great Swedish chemist Jacob Berzelius. In 1816, he published his *Essay to establish a purely Scientific System of Mineralogy, by means of the Application of the Electro-chemical Theory and the Chemical Doctrine of Definite Proportions.* It is manifest that, for minerals which are constituted by the law of Definite Proportions, this constitution must be a most essential part of their character. The electro-chemical theory was called in aid, in addition to the composi-

tion, because, distinguishing the elements of all compounds as electro-positive and electro-negative, and giving to every element a place in a series, defined by the degree of these relations, it seemed to afford a rigorous and complete principle of arrangement. Accordingly, Berzelius, in his First System, arranged minerals according to their electro-positive element, and the elements according to their electro-positive rank; and supposed that he had thus removed all that was arbitrary and vague in the previous chemical systems of mineralogy.

Though the attempt appeared so well justified by the state of chemical science, and was so plausible in its principle, it was not long before events showed that there was some fallacy in these specious appearances. In 1820, Mitscherlich discovered isomorphism: it appeared that bodies with very different electro-positive elements could not be distinguished; it was impossible, therefore, to put them in distant portions of the classification;—the first system of Berzelius crumbled to pieces.

But Berzelius did not so easily resign his project. With the most unhesitating confession of his first failure, but with undaunted courage, he again girded himself to the task of rebuilding his edifice. Defeated at the electro-positive position, he now resolved to make a stand at the electro-negative element. In 1824, he published in the Transactions of the Swedish Academy, a Memoir *On the Alterations in the Chemical Mineral System, which necessarily follow from the property exhibited by Isomorphous Bodies, of*

replacing each other in given proportions. The alteration was, in fact, an inversion of the system, with an attempt still to preserve the electro-chemical principle of arrangement. Thus, instead of arranging metallic minerals according to the metal, under iron, copper, &c., all the sulphurets were classed together, all the oxides together, all the sulphates together, and so in other respects. That such an order was a great improvement upon the preceding one, cannot be doubted; but we shall see, I think, that as a strict scientific system it was not successful. The discovery of isomorphism, however, naturally led to such attempts. Thus Gmelin, in 1825, published a mineral system[3], which, like that of Berzelius, founded its leading distinctions on the electro-negative, or, as it was sometimes termed, the *formative* element of bodies; and, besides this, took account of the numbers of atoms or proportions which appear in the composition of the body, distinguishing, for instance, silicates, as simple, double, and so on, to *quintuple* (*Pechstein*) and *sextuple* (*Perlstein*). In like manner, Nordenskiöld devised a system resting on the same bases, taking into account also the crystalline form. In 1824, Beudant published his *Traité Elémentaire de Minéralogie*, in which he professes to found his arrangement on the electro-negative element, and on Ampère's circular arrangement of elementary substances. Such schemes exhibit rather a play of the mere logical faculty, exercising itself on assumed

[3] Zeitsch. der Min. 1825, p. 435.

principles, than any attempt at the real interpretation of nature. Other such pure chemical systems may have been published, but it is not necessary to accumulate instances. I proceed to consider their result.

Sect. 3.—*Failure of the Attempts at Systematic Reform.*

It may appear presumptuous to speak of the failure of those whom, like Berzelius and Mohs, we acknowledge as our masters, at a period when, probably, they and some of their admirers still hold them to have succeeded in their attempts to construct a consistent system. But I conceive that my office as an historian requires me to exhibit the fortunes of this science in the most distinct form of which they admit, and that I cannot evade the duty of attempting to seize the true aspect of recent occurrences in the world of science. Hence I venture to speak of the failure of both the attempts at framing a pure scientific system of mineralogy,—that founded on the chemical, and that founded on the natural-history principle; because it is clear that they have not obtained that which alone we could, according to the views here presented, consider as success,—a coincidence of each with the other. A chemical system of arrangement, which should bring together, in all cases, the substances which come nearest each other in external properties:—a natural-history system, which should be found to arrange bodies in complete accordance with their chemical constitution:—if such systems existed,

they might, with justice, claim to have succeeded. Their agreement would be their verification. The interior and the exterior system are the type and the antitype, and their entire correspondence would establish the mode of interpretation beyond doubt. But nothing less than this will satisfy the requisitions of science. And when, therefore, the chemical and the natural-history system, though evidently, as I conceive, tending towards each other, are still far from coming together, it is impossible to allow that either method has been successful in regard to its proper object.

But we may, I think, point out the fallacy of the principles, as well as the imperfection of the results, of both of those methods. With regard to that of Berzelius, indeed, the history of the subject obviously betrays its unsoundness. The electro-positive principle was, in a very short time after its adoption, proved and acknowledged to be utterly untenable: what security have we that the electro-negative element is more trustworthy? Was not the necessity of an entire change of system, a proof that the ground, whatever that was, on which the electro-chemical principle was adopted, was an unfounded assumption? And, in fact, do we not find that the same argument which was allowed to be fatal to the First System of Berzelius, applies in exactly the same manner against the Second? If the electro-positive elements be often isomorphous, are not the electro-negative elements sometimes isomorphous also? for instance, the arsenic and phosphoric acids. But to go further, what *is* the ground on which the

electro-chemical arrangement is adopted? Granted that the electrical relations of bodies are important; but how do we come to know that they have anything to do with mineralogy? How does it appear that on them, principally, depend those external properties which mineralogy must study? How does it appear that because sulphur is the electro-negative part of one body, and an acid the electro-negative part of another, these two elements similarly affect the compounds? How does it appear that there is any analogy whatever in their functions? We allow that the composition must, in *some way*, determine the classified place of the mineral,—but why in *this* way?

I do not dwell on the remark which Berzelius himself[6] makes on Nordenskiöld's system;—that it assumes a perfect knowledge of the composition in every case; although, considering the usual discrepancies of analyses of minerals, this objection must make all pure chemical systems useless. But I may observe, that mineralogists have not yet determined what characters are sufficiently fixed to determine a species of minerals. We have seen that the ancient notion of the composition of a species, has been unsettled by the discovery of isomorphism. The tenet of the constancy of the angle is rendered doubtful by cases of plesiomorphism. The optical properties, which are so closely connected with the crystalline, are still so imperfectly known, that they are subject to changes which appear capricious and arbitrary. Both the

[6] Jahres Bericht. viii. 188.

chemical and the optical mineralogists have constantly, of late, found occasion to separate species which had been united, and to bring together those which had been divided. Everything shows that, in this science, we have our classification still to begin. The detection of that fixity of characters, on which a right establishment of species must rest, is not yet complete, great as the progress is which we have made, by acquiring a knowledge of the laws of crystallization and of definite chemical constitution. Our ignorance may surprise us; but it may diminish our surprise to recollect, that the knowledge which we seek is that of the laws of the physical constitution of all bodies whatever; for to us, as mineralogists, all chemical compounds are minerals.

The defect of the principle of the natural-history classifiers may be thus stated:—in studying the external characters of bodies, they take for granted that they can, without any other light, discover the relative value and importance of those characters. The grouping of species into a genus, of genera into an order, according to the method of this school, proceeds by no definite rules, but by a latent talent of appreciation,—a sort of classifying instinct. But this course cannot reasonably be expected to lead to scientific truth; for it can hardly be hoped, by any one who looks at the general course of science, that we shall discover the relation between external characters and chemical composition, otherwise than by tracing their association in cases where both are known. It is urged that in other classificatory sciences, in botany, for

example, we obtain a natural classification from external characters without having recourse to any other source of knowledge. But this is not true in the sense here meant. In framing a natural system of botany, we have constantly before our eyes the principles of physiology; and we estimate the value of the characters of a plant by their bearing on its functions, —by their place in its organization. In an unorganic body, the chemical constitution is the law of its being; and we shall never succeed in framing a science of such bodies, but by studiously directing our efforts to the interpretation of that law.

On these grounds, then, I conceive, that the bold attempts of Mohs and of Berzelius to give new forms to mineralogy, cannot be deemed successful in the manner in which their authors aspired to succeed. Neither of them can be marked as a permanent reformation of the science. I shall not inquire how far they have been accepted by men of science, for I conceive that their greatest effect has been to point out improvements which might be made in mineralogy without going the whole length either of the *pure* chemical, or of the *pure* natural-history system.

Sect. 4.—Return to Mixed Systems with Improvements.

In spite of the efforts of the purists, mineralogists returned to mixed systems of classification; but these systems are much better than they were before such efforts were made.

The second system of Berzelius, though not tenable in its rigorous form, approaches far nearer than any previous system to a complete character, bringing together like substances in a large portion of its extent. The system of Mohs also, whether or not unconsciously swayed by chemical doctrines, forms orders which have a community of chemical character; thus, the minerals of the order *haloide* are salts of oxides, and those of the order *pyrites* are sulphurets of metals. Thus the two methods appear to be converging to a common centre; and though we cannot follow either of them to this point of union, we may learn from both in what direction we are to look for it. If we regard the best of the pure systems hitherto devised as indications of the nature of that system, perfect both as a chemical and as a natural-history system, to which a more complete condition of mineralogical knowledge may lead us, we may obtain, even at present, a tolerably good approximation to a complete classification; and such a one, if we recollect that it must be imperfect, and is to be held as provisional only, may be of no small value and use to us.

The best of the mixed systems produced by this compromise again comes from Freiberg, and was published by Professor Naumann in 1828. Most of his orders have both a chemical character and great external resemblances. Thus his *haloides*, divided into *unmetallic* and *metallic*, and these again into *hydrous* and *anhydrous*, give good natural groups. The most difficult minerals to arrange in all systems are the siliceous ones. These Naumann calls

silicides, and subdivides them into *metallic*, *unmetallic*, and *amphoteric* or mixed; and again, into *hydrous* and *anhydrous*. Such a system is at least a good basis for future researches; and this is, as we have said, all that we can at present hope for. And when we recollect that the natural-history principle of classification has begun, as we have already seen, to make its appearance in our treatises of chemistry, we cannot doubt that some progress is making towards the object which I have pointed out. But we know not yet how far we are from the end. The combination of chemical, crystallographical, physical and optical properties into some lofty generalisation, is probably a triumph reserved for future and distant years.

Conclusion.—The history of mineralogy, both by its successes and by its failures, teaches us this lesson;—that in the sciences of classification, the establishment of the fixity of characters, and the discovery of such characters as are fixed, are steps of the first importance in the progress of these sciences. The recollection of this maxim may aid us in shaping our course through the history of other sciences of this kind; in which, from the extent of the subject, and the mass of literature belonging to it, we might at first almost despair of casting the history into distinct epochs and periods. To the most prominent of such sciences, Botany, I now proceed.

BOOK XVI.

CLASSIFICATORY SCIENCES.

HISTORY

SYSTEMATIC BOTANY AND ZOOLOGY.

. . . . Vatem aspicies quæ rupe sub altâ
Fata canit, foliisque notas et nomina mandat.
Quæcunque in foliis descripsit carmina virgo
Digerit in numerum atque antro seclusa reliquit
Illa manent immota locis neque ab ordine cedunt.

VIRGIL. *Æneid*, iii. 443.

Behold the Sibyl!—Her who weaves a long,
A tangled, full, yet sweetly-flowing song.
Wondrous her skill; for leaf on leaf she frames
Unerring symbols and enduring names;
And as her nicely-measured line she binds,
For leaf on leaf a fitting place she finds;
Their place once found, no more the leaves depart,
But fixed rest:—such is her magic art.

INTRODUCTION.

We now arrive at that study which offers the most copious and complete example of the sciences of classification, I mean Botany. And in this case, we have before us a branch of knowledge of which we may say, more properly than of any of the sciences which we have reviewed since Astronomy, that it has been constantly advancing, more or less rapidly, from the infancy of the human race to the present day. One of the reasons of this resemblance in the fortunes of two studies so widely dissimilar, is to be found in a simplicity of principle which they have in common; the ideas of likeness and difference, on which the knowledge of plants depends, are, like the ideas of space and time, which are the foundation of astronomy, readily apprehended with clearness and precision, even without any peculiar culture of the intellect. But another reason why, in the history of botany, as in that of astronomy, the progress of knowledge forms an unbroken line from the earliest times, is precisely the great difference of the kind of knowledge which has been attained in the two cases. In astronomy, the discovery of general truths began at an early period of civilization; in botany, it has hardly yet begun; and thus, in each of these departments of study, the lore of the ancient is homogeneous with that of the modern times. The re-

semblance of the form of their history arises from the diversity of their materials.

I shall not here dwell further upon this subject, but proceed to trace rapidly the progress of *Systematic Botany*, as the classificatory science is usually denominated, when it is requisite to distinguish between that and Physiological Botany. My own imperfect acquaintance with this study admonishes me not to venture into its details, further than my purpose absolutely requires. I trust that, by taking my views principally from writers who are generally allowed to possess the best insight into the science, I may be able to draw the larger features of its history with tolerable correctness; and if I succeed in this, I shall attain an object of great importance in my general scheme.

CHAPTER I.

Imaginary Knowledge of Plants.

The apprehension of such differences and resemblances as those by which we group together and discriminate the various kinds of plants and animals, and the appropriation of words to mark and convey the resulting notions, must be presupposed, as essential to the very beginning of human knowledge. In whatever manner we imagine man to be placed on the earth by his Creator, these processes must be conceived to be, as our Scriptures represent them, contemporaneous with the first exertion of reason, and the first use of speech. If we were to indulge ourselves in framing a hypothetical account of the origin of language, we should probably assume as the first-formed words, those which depend on the visible likeness or unlikeness of objects; and should arrange as of subsequent formation, those terms which imply, in the mind, acts of wider combination and higher abstraction. At any rate, it is certain that the names of the kinds of vegetables and animals are very abundant even in the most uncivilized stages of man's career. Thus we are informed[1] that the inhabitants of New Zealand have a distinct name of every tree and plant in their island, of

[1] Yate's New Zealand, p. 238.

which there are six or seven hundred or more different kinds. In the accounts of the rudest tribes, in the earliest legends, poetry, and literature of nations, pines and oaks, roses and violets, the olive and the vine, and the thousand other productions of the earth, have a place, and are spoken of in a manner which assumes, that in such kinds of natural objects, permanent and infallible distinctions had been observed and universally recognised.

For a long period, it was not suspected that any ambiguity or confusion could arise from the use of such terms; and when such inconveniences did occur, (as even in early times they did,) men were far from divining that the proper remedy was the construction of a science of classification. The loose and insecure terms of the language of common life retained their place in botany, long after their defects were severely felt: for instance, the vague and unscientific distinction of vegetables into *trees*, *shrubs*, and *herbs*, kept its ground till the time of Linnæus.

While it was thus imagined that the identification of a plant, by means of its name, might properly be trusted to the common uncultured faculties of the mind, and to what we may call the instinct of language, all the attention and study which were bestowed on such objects, were naturally employed in learning and thinking upon such circumstances respecting them as were supplied by any of the common channels through which knowledge and opinion flow into men's minds.

The reader need hardly be reminded that in the

earlier periods of man's mental culture, he acquires those opinions on which he loves to dwell, not by the exercise of observation subordinate to reason; but, far more, by his fancy and his emotions, his love of the marvellous, his hopes and fears. It cannot surprise us, therefore, that the earliest lore concerning plants which we discover in the records of the past, consists of mythological legends, marvellous relations, and extraordinary medicinal qualities. To the lively fancy of the Greeks, the Narcissus, which bends its head over the stream, was originally a youth who in such an attitude became enamoured of his own beauty: the hyacinth[2], on whose petals the notes of grief were traced (A I, AI), recorded the sorrow of Apollo for the death of his favourite Hyacinthus: the beautiful lotus of India[3], which floats with its splendid flower on the surface of the water, is the chosen seat of the goddess Lackshmi, the daughter of Occan[4]. In Egypt, too[5], Osiris swam on a lotus-leaf, and Harpocrates was cradled in one. The lotus-eaters of Homer lost immediately their love of home. Every one knows how easy it would be to accumulate such tales of wonder or religion.

Those who attended to the effects of plants, might discover in them some medicinal properties, and might easily imagine more; and when the love of

[2] Lilium martagon.

Ipse suos gemitus foliis inscribit et AI, AI,
Flos habet inscriptum funestaque litera ducta est. OVID.

[3] Nelumbium speciosum.

[4] Sprengel, Geschichte der Botanik, i. 27. [5] Ib. i. 28.

the marvellous was added to the hope of health, it is easy to believe that men would be very credulous. We need not dwell upon the examples of this. In Pliny's Introduction to that book of his Natural History which treats of the medicinal virtues of plants, he says[6], "Antiquity was so much struck with the properties of herbs, that it affirmed things incredible. Xanthus, the historian, says, that a man killed by a dragon, will be restored to life by an herb which he calls *balin;* and that Thylo, when killed by a dragon, was recovered by the same plant. Democritus asserted, and Theophrastus believed, that there was an herb, at the touch of which, the wedge which the woodman had driven into a tree would leap out again. Though we cannot credit these stories, most persons believe that almost anything might be effected by means of herbs, if their virtues were fully known." How far from a reasonable estimate of the reality of such virtues were the persons who entertained this belief, we may judge from the many superstitious observances which they associated with the gathering and using of medicinal plants. Theophrastus speaks of these[7]: "The drug-sellers and the rhizotomists (root-cutters) tell us," he says, "some things which may be true, but other things which are merely solemn quackery[8]; thus, they direct us to gather some plants, standing from the wind, and with our bodies anointed; some by night, some by day, some before the sun falls on

[6] Lib. xxv. 5.

[7] De Plantis, ix. 9.

[8] Επιτραγῳδοῦντες.

them. So far there may be something in their rules. But others are too fantastical and far-fetched. It is, perhaps, not absurd to use a prayer in plucking a plant; but they go further than this. We are to draw a sword three times round the mandragora, and to cut it looking to the west: again, to dance round it, and to use obscene language, as they say those who sow cumin should utter blasphemies. Again, we are to draw a line round the black hellebore, standing to the east and praying; and to avoid an eagle either on the right or on the left; for say they, 'if an eagle be near, the cutter will die in a year.'"

This extract may serve to show the extent to which these imaginations were prevalent, and the manner in which they were looked upon by Theophrastus, our first great botanical author. And we may now consider that we have given sufficient attention to these fables and superstitions, which have no place in the history of the progress of real knowledge, except to show the strange chaos of wild fancies and legends out of which it had to emerge. We proceed to trace the history of the knowledge of plants.

CHAPTER II.

Unsystematic Knowledge of Plants.

A step was made towards the formation of the Science of Plants, although undoubtedly a slight one, as soon as men began to collect information concerning them and their properties, from a love and reverence for knowledge, independent of the passion for the marvellous and the impulse of practical utility. This step was very early made. The "wisdom" of Solomon, and the admiration which was bestowed upon it, prove, even at that period, such a working of the speculative faculty: and we are told, that among other evidences of his being "wiser than all men," "he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall[1]." The father of history, Herodotus, shows us that a taste for natural history had, in his time, found a place in the minds of the Greeks. In speaking of the luxuriant vegetation of the Babylonian plain[2], he is so far from desiring to astonish merely, that he says, "the blades of wheat and barley are full four fingers wide; but as to the size of the trees which grow from millet and sesame, though I could mention it, I will not; knowing well that those who have not been in that

[1] 1 Kings iv. 33. [2] Herod., i. 193.

country will hardly believe what I have said already." He then proceeds to describe some remarkable circumstances respecting the fertilization of the date-palms in Assyria.

This curious and active spirit of the Greeks led rapidly, as we have seen in other instances, to attempts at collecting and systematizing knowledge on almost every subject: and in this, as in almost every other department, Aristotle may be fixed upon, as the representative of the highest stage of knowledge and system which they ever attained. The vegetable kingdom, like every other province of nature, was one of the fields of the labours of this universal philosopher. But though his other works on natural history have come down to us, and are a most valuable monument of the state of such knowledge in his time, his Treatise on Plants is lost. The book "De Plantis," which appears with his name, is an imposture of the middle ages, full of errors and absurdities[8].

His disciple, friend, and successor, Theophrastus of Eresos, is, as we have said already, the first great writer on botany whose works we possess; and, as may be said in most cases of the first great writer, he offers to us a richer store of genuine knowledge and good sense than all his successors. But we find in him that the Greeks of his time, who aspired, as we have said, to collect and *systematize* a body of information on every subject, failed in one half of their object, as far as related to the vegetable world.

[8] Mirbel, Botanique, ii. 505.

Their attempts at a systematic distribution of plants were altogether futile; although Aristotle's divisions of the animal kingdom are, even at this day, looked upon with admiration by the best naturalists. The arrangements and comparisons of plants which were contrived by Theophrastus and his successors, have not left the slightest trace in the modern form of the science; and, therefore, according to our plan, are of no importance in our history. And thus we can treat all the miscellaneous information concerning vegetables which was accumulated by the whole of this school of writers, in no other way than as something antecedent to the first progress towards systematic knowledge.

The information thus collected by the unsystematic writers is of various kinds; and relates to the economical and medicinal uses of plants, their habits, mode of cultivation, and many other circumstances: it frequently includes some description; but this is always extremely imperfect, because the essential conditions of description had not been discovered. Of works composed of materials so heterogeneous, it can be of little use to produce specimens; but I may quote a few words from Theophrastus, which may serve to connect him with the future history of the science, as bearing upon one of the many problems respecting the identification of ancient and modern plants. It was made a question whether the following description does not refer to the potato[4]. He is speaking of the differences of roots: "Some roots," he says,

[4] Theoph. i. 11.

"are still different from those which have been described; as that of the *arachidna*[5] plant: for this bears fruit under-ground as well as above: the fleshy part sends one thick root deep into the ground, but the others, which bear the fruit, are more slender and higher up, and ramified. It loves a sandy soil, and has no leaf whatever."

The books of Aristotle and Theophrastus soon took the place of the book of nature in the attention of the degenerate philosophers who succeeded them. A story is told by Strabo[6] concerning the fate of the works of these great naturalists. In the course of the wars and changes which occurred among the successors of Alexander, the heirs of Theophrastus tried to secure to themselves his books, and those of his master, by burying them in the ground. There the manuscripts suffered much from damp and worms; till Apollonicon, a book-collector of those days, purchased them, and attempted, in his own way, to supply what time had obliterated. When Sylla marched the Roman troops into Athens, he took possession of the library of Apollonicon; and the works which it contained were soon circulated among the learned of Rome and Alexandria, who were thus enabled to *Aristotelize*[7] on botany as on other subjects.

The library collected by the Attalic kings of Pergamus, and the Alexandrian Museum, founded and supported by the Ptolemies of Egypt, rather

[5] Most probably the *Arachnis hypogæa*, or ground-nut.

[6] Strabo, lib. xiii. c. 1, § 54. [7] Αριστοτελίζειν.

fostered the commentatorial spirit than promoted the increase of any real knowledge of nature. The Romans, in this as in other subjects, were practical, not speculative. They had, in the times of their national vigour, several writers on agriculture, who were highly esteemed; but no author, till we come to Pliny, who dwells on the mere knowledge of plants. And even in Pliny it is easy to perceive that we have before us a writer who extracted his information principally from books. This remarkable man[8], in the middle of a public and active life, of campaigns and voyages, contrived to accumulate, by reading and study, an extraordinary store of knowledge of all kinds. So unwilling was he to have his reading and note-making interrupted, that, even before day-break in winter, and from his litter as he travelled, he was wont to dictate to his amanuensis, who was obliged to preserve his hand from the numbness which the cold occasioned, by the use of gloves[9].

It has been ingeniously observed, that we may find traces in the botanical part of his Natural History, of the errors which this hurried and broken habit of study produced; and that he appears frequently to have had books read to him and to have heard them amiss[10]. Thus, among several other instances, Theophrastus having said that the plane-tree is in Italy rare[11], Pliny, misled by the similarity

[8] Sprengel, i. 163.

[9] Plin. Jun. Epist. 3. 5.

[10] Sprengel, i. 163.

[11] Theoph. iv. 7. Ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ Αδρίᾳ πλάτανον οὐ φασὶν εἶναι πλὴν περὶ το Διομήδους ἱερόν, σπανίαν δὲ καὶ ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ πάσῃ.

of the Greek word (*spanian*, rare), says that the tree occurs in Italy and Spain[12]. His work has, with great propriety, been called the Encyclopædia of Antiquity; and, in truth, there are few portions of the learning of the times to which it does not refer. Of the thirty-seven books of which it consists, no less than sixteen (from the twelfth to the twenty-seventh) relate to plants. The information which is collected in these books, is of the most miscellaneous kind; and the author admits, with little distinction, truth and error, useful knowledge and absurd fables. The declamatory style, and the comprehensive and lofty tone of thought which we have already spoken of as characteristic of the Roman writers, are peculiarly observable in him. The manner of his death is well known: it was occasioned by the eruption of Vesuvius, A.D. 79, to which, in his curiosity, he ventured so near as to be suffocated.

Pliny's work acquired an almost unlimited authority, as one of the standards of botanical knowledge, in the middle ages; and even more than his, that of his contemporary, Pedanius Dioscorides, of Anazarbus in Cilicia. This work, written in Greek, is held by the best judges[13] to offer no evidence that the author observed for himself. Yet he says expressly in his Preface, that his love of natural history, and his military life, have led him into many countries, in which he has had opportunity to become acquainted

[12] Plin. Nat. Hist. xii. 3. Et alias (platanos) fuisse in Italia, ac nominatim *Hispania*, apud auctores invenitur.

[13] Mirbel, 510.

with the nature of herbs and trees[14]. He speaks of six hundred plants, but often indicates only their names and properties, giving no description by which they can be identified. The main cause of his great reputation in subsequent times was, that he says much of the medicinal virtues of vegetables.

We come now to the ages of darkness and lethargy, when the habit of original thought seems to die away, as the talent of original observation had done before. Commentators and mystics succeed to the philosophical naturalists of better times. And though a new race, altogether distinct in blood and character from the Greek, appropriates to itself the stores of Grecian learning, this movement does not, as might be expected, break the chains of literary servility. The Arabs bring to the cultivation of the science of the Greeks, their oriental habit of submission, their oriental love of wonder; and thus, while they swell the herd of commentators and mystics, they produce no philosopher.

Yet the Arabs discharged an important function in the history of human knowledge[15], by preserving, and transmitting to more enlightened times, the intellectual treasures of antiquity. The unhappy dissensions which took place in the Christian church had scattered these treasures over the East, at a period much antecedent to the rise of the Saracen power. In the fifth century, the adherents of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, were declared heretical by the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431,) and

[14] Sprengel, i. 136. [15] Ib. i. 203.

driven into exile. In this manner, many of the most learned and ingenious men of the Christian world were removed to the Euphrates, where they formed the *Chaldean* church, erected the celebrated Nestorian school of Edessa, and gave rise to many offsets from this in various regions. Already, in the fifth century, Hibas, Cumas, and Probus, translated the writings of Aristotle into Syriac. But the learned Nestorians paid an especial attention to the art of medicine, and were the most zealous students of the works of the Greek physicians. At Djondisabor, in Khusistan, they became an ostensible medical school, who distributed academical honours as the result of public disputations. The califs of Bagdad heard of the fame and the wisdom of the doctors of Djondisabor, summoned some of them to Bagdad, and took measures for the foundation of a school of learning in that city. The value of the skill, the learning, and the virtues of the Nestorians, was so strongly felt, that they were allowed by the Mohammedans the free exercise of the Christian religion, and intrusted with the conduct of the studies of those of the Moslemin, whose education was most cared for. The affinity of the Syriac and Arabic languages made the task of instruction more easy. The Nestorians translated the works of the ancients out of the former into the latter language: hence there are still found Arabic manuscripts of Dioscorides, with Syriac words in the margin. Pliny and Aristotle likewise assumed an Arabic dress; and were, as well as Dioscorides, the foundation of

instruction in all the Arabian academies; of which a great number were established throughout the Saracen empire, from Bokhara in the remotest east, to Marocco and Cordova in the west. After some time, the Mohammedans themselves began to translate and extract from their Syriac sources; and at length to write works of their own. And thus arose vast libraries, such as that of Cordova, which contained 250,000 volumes.

The Nestorians are stated[16] to have first established among the Arabs those collections of medicinal substances (*Apothecæ*), from which our term *Apothecary* is taken; and to have written books (*Dispensatoria*) containing systematic instructions for the employment of these medicaments; a word which long continued to be applied in the same sense, and which we also retain, though in a modified application.

The directors of these collections were supposed to be intimately acquainted with plants; and yet, in truth, the knowledge of plants owed but little to them; for the Arabic Dioscorides was the source and standard of their knowledge. The flourishing commerce of the Arabians, their numerous and distant journeys, made them, no doubt, practically acquainted with the productions of lands unknown to the Greeks and Romans. Their Nestorian teachers had established Christianity even as far as China and Malabar; and their travellers mention[17] the camphor of Sumatra, the aloe-wood of Socotra near Java, the

[16] Sprengel, i. 205.

[17] Ib. i. 206.

tea of China. But they never learned the art of converting their practical into speculative knowledge. They treat of plants only in so far as their use in medicine is concerned[18], and follow Dioscorides in the description, and even in the order of the plants, except when they arrange them according to the Arabic alphabet. With little clearness of view, they often mistake what they read[19]: thus when Dioscorides says that *ligusticon* grows on the *Apennine*, a mountain not far from the *Alps;* Avicenna, misled by a resemblance of the Arabic letters, quotes him as saying that the plant grows on *Akabis*, a mountain near *Egypt*.

It is of little use to enumerate such writers. One of the most noted of them was Mesuë, physician of the Calif of Kahirah. His work, which was translated into Latin at a later period, was entitled, *On Simple Medicines;* a title which was common to many medical treatises, from the time of Galen in the second century. Indeed, of this opposition of simple and compound medicines, we still have traces in our language:

> He would ope his leathern scrip,
> And show me *simples* of a thousand names,
> Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
>
> MILTON, *Comus*.

Where the subject of our history is so entirely at a stand, it is unprofitable to dwell on a list of names. The Arabians, small as their science was, were able

[18] Sprengel, i. 207. [19] Ib. i. 211.

to instruct the Christians. Their writings were translated by learned Europeans, for instance, Michael Scot, and Constantine of Africa, a Carthaginian who had lived forty years among the Saracens[20], and who died A.D. 1087. Among his works, is a Treatise, *De Gradibus*, which contains the Arabian medicinal lore. In the thirteenth century occur Encyclopædias, as that of Albertus Magnus, and of Vincent of Beauvais; but these contain no natural history except traditions and fables. Even the ancient writers were altogether perverted and disfigured. The Dioscorides of the middle ages varied materially from ours[21]. Monks, merchants, and adventurers travelled far, but knowledge was little increased. Simon of Genoa[22], a writer on plants in the fourteenth century, boasts that he perambulated the East in order to collect plants. "Yet in his *Clavis Sanationis*," says a modern botanical writer[23], "we discover no trace of an acquaintance with nature. He merely compares the Greek, Arabic, and Latin names of plants, and gives their medicinal effect after his predecessors:"—so little true is it, that the use of the senses alone necessarily leads to real knowledge.

Though the growing activity of thought in Europe, and the revived acquaintance with the authors of Greece in their genuine form, were gradually dispelling the intellectual clouds of the middle ages, yet during the fifteenth century, botany makes no

[20] Sprengel, i. 230.
[21] Ib. i. 239.
[22] Ib. i. 241.
[23] Ib. ib.

approach to a scientific form. The greater part of the literature of this subject consisted of Herbals, all of which were formed on the same plan, and appeared under titles such as *Hortus*, or *Ortus Sanitatis*. There are, for example, three[24] such German Herbals, with wood-cuts, which date about 1490. But an important peculiarity in these works is, that they contain some indigenous species placed side by side with the old ones. In 1516, *The Grete Herbal* was published in England, also with wood-cuts. It contains an account of more than four hundred vegetables, and their products; of which one hundred and fifty are English, and are no way distinguished from the exotics by the mode in which they are inserted in the work.

We shall see, in the next Chapter, that when the intellect of Europe began really to apply itself to the observation of nature, the progress towards genuine science soon began to be visible, in this as in other subjects; but before this tendency could operate freely, the history of botany was destined to show, in another instance, how much more grateful to man, even when roused to intelligence and activity, is the study of tradition than the study of nature. When the scholars of Europe had become acquainted with the genuine works of the ancients in the original languages, the pleasure and admiration which they felt, led them to the most zealous endeavours to illustrate and apply what they read. They fell into

[24] Augsburg, 1488. Mainz, 1491. Lubeck, 1492.

the error of supposing that the plants described by Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Pliny, must be those which grew in their own fields. And thus Ruellius[25], a French physician, who only travelled in the environs of Paris and in Picardy, imagined that he found there the plants of Italy and Greece. The originators of genuine botany in Germany, Brunfels and Tragus, committed the same mistake: and hence arose the misapplication of classical names to many genera. The labours of many other learned men took the same direction, of treating the ancient writers as if they alone were the sources of knowledge and truth.

But the philosophical spirit of Europe was already too vigorous to allow this superstitious erudition to exercise a lasting sway. Leonicenus, who taught at Ferrara till he was almost a hundred years old, and died in 1524[26], disputed, with great freedom, the authority of the Arabian writers, and even of Pliny. He saw, and showed by many examples, how little Pliny himself knew of nature, and how many errors he had made or transmitted. The same independence of thought with regard to other ancient writers, was manifested by other scholars. Yet the power of ancient authority melted away but gradually. Thus Antonius Brasavola, who established on the banks of the Po the first botanical garden of modern times, published in 1536, his *Examen omnium simplicium Medicamentorum;* and, as Cuvier says[27], though

[25] De Natura Stirpium, 1536.

[26] Sprengel, i. 252.

[27] Hist. des Sc. Nat. ii. 169

he studied plants in nature, his book (written in the Platonic form of dialogue,) has still the character of a commentary on the ancients.

The Germans appear to have been the first to liberate themselves from this thraldom, and to publish works founded mainly on actual observation. The first of the botanists who had this great merit is Otho Brunfels of Mentz, whose work, *Herbarum Vivæ Icones*, appeared in 1530. It consists of two volumes in folio, with wood-cuts; and in 1532, a German edition was published. The plants which it contains are given without any arrangement, and thus he belongs to the period of unsystematic knowledge. Yet the progress towards the formation of a system manifested itself so immediately in the series of German botanists to which he belongs, that we might with almost equal propriety transfer him to the history of that progress; to which we now proceed.

CHAPTER III.

Formation of a System of Arrangement of Plants.

Sect. 1.—*Prelude to the Epoch of Cæsalpinus.*

The arrangement of plants in the earliest works was either arbitrary, or according to their use, or some other extraneous circumstance, as in Pliny. This, and the division of vegetables by Dioscorides into *aromatic, alimentary, medicinal, vinous,* is, as will be easily seen, a merely casual distribution. The Arabian writers, and those of the middle ages, showed still more clearly their insensibility to the nature of system, by adopting an alphabetical arrangement; which was employed also in the Herbals of the sixteenth century. Brunfels, as we have said, adopted no principle of order: nor did his successor, Fuchs. Yet the latter writer urged his countrymen to put aside their Arabian and barbarous Latin doctors, and to observe the vegetable kingdom for themselves; and himself set the example of doing this, examined plants with zeal and accuracy, and made above fifteen hundred drawings of them[1].

The difficulty of representing plants in any useful

[1] His Historia Stirpium was published at Basil in 1542.

way by means of drawings, is greater, perhaps, than it at first appears. So long as no distinction was made of the importance of different organs of the plant, a picture representing merely the obvious general appearance and larger parts, was of comparatively small value. Hence we are not to wonder at the slighting manner in which Pliny speaks of such records. "Those who gave such pictures of plants," he says, "Crateuas, Dionysius, Metrodorus, have shown nothing clearly, except the difficulty of their undertaking. A picture may be mistaken, and is changed and, disfigured by copyists; and, without these imperfections, it is not enough to represent the plant in one state, since it has four different aspects in the four seasons of the year."

The diffusion of the habit of exact drawing, especially among the countrymen of Albert Durer and Lucas Cranach, and the invention of wood-cuts and copper-plates, remedied some of these defects. Moreover, the conviction gradually arose in men's minds that the structure of the flower and the fruit are the most important circumstances in fixing the identity of the plant. Theophrastus speaks with precision of the organs which he describes, but these are principally the leaves, roots, and stems. Fuchs uses the term *apices* for the anthers, and *gluma* for the blossom of grasses, thus showing that he had noticed these parts as generally present.

In the next writer whom we have to mention, we find some traces of a perception of the real resemblances of plants beginning to appear. It is impossible

to explain the progress of such views without assuming in the reader some acquaintance with plants; but a very few words may suffice to convey the requisite notions. Even in the plants which most commonly come in our way, we may perceive instances of the resemblances of which we speak. Thus mint, marjoram, basil, sage, lavender, thyme, dead-nettle, and many other plants, have a tubular flower, of which the mouth is divided into two lips; hence they are formed into a family, and termed *Labiatæ*. Again, the stock, the wall-flower, the mustard, the cress, the lady-smock, the shepherd's-purse, have, among other similarities, their blossoms with four petals arranged crosswise; these are all of the order *Cruciferæ*. Other flowers, apparently more complex, still resemble each other, as daisy, marigold, aster, and chamomile; these belong to the order *Compositæ*. And though the members of such families may differ widely in their larger parts, their stems and leaves, the close study of nature leads the botanist irresistibly to consider their resemblances as occupying a far more important place than their differences. It is the general establishment of this conviction and its consequences which we have now to follow.

The first writer in whom we find the traces of an arrangement depending upon these natural resemblances, is Hieronymus Tragus, (Jerom Bock,) a laborious German botanist, who, in 1551, published a herbal. In this work, several of the species included in those natural families to which we have

alluded[8], as for instance, the Labiatæ, the Cruciferæ, the Compositæ, are for the most part brought together; and thus, although with many mistakes as to such connexions, a new principle of order is introduced into the subject.

In pursuing the developement of such principles of natural order, it is necessary to recollect that the principles lead to an assemblage of divisions and groups, successively subordinate the lower to the higher, like the brigades, regiments, and companies of an army, or the provinces, townships, and parishes of a kingdom. Species are included in Genera, Genera in Families or Orders, and Orders in Classes. The perception that there is some connexion among the species of plants, was the first essential step; the detection of different marks and characters which should give, on the one hand, limited groups, on the other, comprehensive divisions, were other highly-important parts of this advance. To point out every successive movement in this progress would be a task of extreme difficulty, but we may note, as the most prominent portions of it, the establishment of the groups which immediately include species, that is, *the formation of genera;* and the invention of a method which should distribute into consistent and distinct divisions the whole vegetable kingdom, that is, *the construction of a system.*

To the second of these two steps we have no difficulty in assigning its proper author. It belongs to Cæsalpinus, and marks the first great epoch of

[8] Sprengel, i. 270.

this science. It is less easy to state to what botanist is due the establishment of genera; yet we may justly assign the greater part of the merit of this invention, as is usually done, to Conrad Gessner of Zurich. This eminent naturalist, after publishing his great work on animals, died[3] of the plague in 1565, at the age of forty-nine, while he was preparing to publish a History of Plants, a sequel to his History of Animals. The fate of the work thus left incomplete was remarkable. It fell into the hands of his pupil, Gaspard Wolf, who was to have published it, but wanting leisure for the office, sold it to Joachim Camerarius, a physician and botanist of Nuremberg, who made use of the engravings prepared by Gessner, in an Epitome which he published in 1586. The text of Gessner's work, after passing through various hands, was published in 1754 under the title of *Gessneri Opera Botanica per duo sæcula desiderata, &c.*, but is very incomplete.

The incomplete state in which Gessner left his botanical labours makes it necessary to seek the evidence of his peculiar views in scattered passages of his correspondence and other works. One of his great merits was, that he saw the peculiar importance of the flower and fruit as affording the characters by which the affinities of plants were to be detected; and that he urged this view upon his contemporaries. His plates present to us, by the

[3] Cuvier, Leçons sur l'Hist. des Sciences Naturelles, p. 193.

side of each plant, its flower and its fruit, carefully engraved. And in his communications with his botanical correspondents, he repeatedly insists on these parts. Thus[4] in 1565 he writes to Zuinger concerning some foreign plants which the latter possessed: "Tell me if your plants have fruit and flower, as well as stalk and leaves, for those are of much the greater consequence. By these three marks,—flower, fruit, and seed,—I find that Saxifraga and Consolida regalis are related to aconite." These characters, derived from the *fructification* (as the assemblage of flower and fruit is called), are the means by which genera are established, and hence, by the best botanists, Gessner is declared to be the inventor of genera[5].

The labours of Gessner in botany, both on account

[4] Epistolæ, fol. 113 a; see also fol. 65 b.

[5] Haller, Biblio. Botanica, i. 284. Methodi Botanicæ rationem primus pervidit;—darenempe et genera quæ plures species comprehenderent et classes quæ multa genera. Varias etiam classes naturales expressit. Characterem in flora inque semine posuit, &c. Rauwolfio Socio Epist. Wolf, p. 39.

Linnæus, Genera Plantarum, Pref. xiii. "A fructificatione plantas distinguere in genera, infinitæ sapientiæ placuisse, detexit posterior ætas, et quidam primus, sæculi sui ornamentum, Conradus Gessnerus, uti patet ex Epistolis ejus postremis, et Tabulis per Camerarium editis."

Cuvier says (Hist. des Sc. Nat. 2e pe. p. 193), after speaking to the same effect, "Il fit voir encore que toutes les plantes qui ont des fleurs et des fruits semblables se ressemblent par leurs autres formes, et souvent aussi par leurs propriétés, et que quand on rapproche ces plantes on obtient ainsi une classification naturelle." I do not know if he here refers to any particular passages of Gessner's works.

of the unfinished state in which he left the application of his principles, and on account of the absence of any principles manifestly applicable to the whole extent of the vegetable kingdom, can only be considered as a prelude to the epoch in which those defects were supplied. To that epoch we now proceed.

Sect. 2.—Epoch of Cæsalpinus.—Formation of a System of Arrangement.

If any one were disposed to question whether Natural History truly belongs to the domain of Inductive Science;—whether it is to be prosecuted by the same methods, and requires the same endowments of mind as those which lead to the successful cultivation of the Physical Sciences,—the circumstances under which Botany has made its advance appear fitted to remove such doubts. The first decided step in this study was merely the construction of a classification of its subjects. We shall, I trust, be able to show that such a classification includes, in reality, the establishment of one general principle, and leads to more. But without here dwelling on this point, it is worth notice that the person to whom we owe this classification, Andreas Cæsalpinus of Arezzo, was one of the most philosophical men of his time, profoundly skilled in the Aristotelian lore which was then esteemed, yet gifted with courage and sagacity which enabled him to weigh the value of the Peripatetic doctrines, to

reject what seemed error, and to look onwards to a better philosophy. "How are we to understand," he inquires, "that we must proceed from universals to particulars (as Aristotle directs), when particulars are better known[6]?" Yet he treats the master with deference, and, as has been observed[7], we see in his great botanical work deep traces of the best features of the Aristotelian school, logic and method; and, indeed, in this work he frequently refers to his *Quæstiones Peripateticæ*. His book, entitled *De Plantis, libri* xvi. appeared at Florence in 1583. The aspect under which his task presented itself to his mind appears to me to possess so much interest, that I will transcribe a few of his reflections. After speaking of the splendid multiplicity of the productions of nature, the confusion which has hitherto prevailed among writers on plants, the growing treasures of the botanical world; he adds[8], "In this immense multitude of plants, I see that want which is most felt in any other unordered crowd: if such an assemblage be not arranged into brigades like an army, all must be tumult and fluctuation. And this accordingly happens in the treatment of plants: for the mind is overwhelmed by the confused accumulation of things, and thus arises endless mistake and angry altercation." He then states his general view, which, as we shall see, was adopted by his successors. "Since all science consists in the collection of similar, and the distinction of dissimilar things;

[6] Quæstiones Peripateticæ, (1569,) lib. i. quæst. 1.
[7] Cuvier, p. 198. [8] Dedicatio. a 2.

and since the consequence of this is a distribution into genera and species, which are to be natural classes governed by real differences, I have attempted to execute this task in the whole range of plants;—ut si quid pro ingenii mei tenuitate in hujusmodi studio profecerim, ad communem utilitatem proferam." We see here how clearly he claims for himself the credit of being the first to execute this task of arrangement.

After certain preparatory speculations, he says[9], "Let us now endeavour to mark the kinds of plants by essential circumstances in the fructification." He then observes, "In the constitution of organs three things are mainly important—the number, the position, the figure." And he then proceeds to exemplify this: "Some have under one flower, ONE *seed*, as *amygdala*, or ONE seed-*receptacle*, as *rosa*; or TWO *seeds*, as *ferularia*, or TWO seed-*receptacles*, as nasturtium; or three, as the *tithymalum* kind have THREE *seeds*, the *bulbaceæ* THREE *receptacles*; or four, as marrubium, FOUR *seeds*, *siler* FOUR *receptacles*; or more, as *cicoraceæ*, and *acanaceæ* have MORE *seeds*, *pinus*, MORE *receptacles*."

It will be observed that we have here ten classes made out by means of number alone, added to the consideration of whether the seed is alone in its covering, as in a cherry, or contained with several others, as in a berry, pod, or capsule. Several of these divisions are, however, further subdivided according to other circumstances, and especially accord-

[9] Lib. i. c. 13, 14.

ing as the vital part of the seed, which he called the heart (*cor*[10]), is situated in the upper or lower part of the seed. As our object here is only to indicate the principle of the method of Cæsalpinus, I need not further dwell on the details, and still less on the defects by which it is disfigured, as, for instance, the retention of the old distinction of trees, shrubs, and herbs.

To some persons it may appear that this arbitrary distribution of the vegetable kingdom, according to the number of parts of a particular kind, cannot deserve to be spoken of as a great discovery. And if, indeed, the distribution had been arbitrary, this would have been true; the real merit of this and of every other system is, that while it is artificial in its form, it is natural in its results. The plants which are associated by the arrangement of Cæsalpinus, are those which have the closest resemblances in the most essential points. Thus, as Linnæus says, though the first in attempting to form natural orders, he observed as many as the most successful of later writers. Thus his *Legumina*[11] correspond to the natural order *Leguminosæ;* his *genus Ferulaceum*[12] to the *Umbellatæ;* his *Bulbaceæ*[13] to *Liliaceæ;* his *Anthemides*[14] to the *Compositæ;* in like manner, the *Borragineæ* are brought together[15], and the *Labiatæ.* That such assemblages are produced by the application of his principles, is a sufficient evidence that they have their foundation in the general laws of the

[10] Corculum of Linnæus. [11] Lib. vi.
[12] Lib. vii. [13] Lib. x. [14] Lib. xii. [15] Lib. xi.

vegetable world. If this had not been the case, the mere application of number or figure alone as a standard of arrangement, would have produced only intolerable anomalies. If, for instance, Cæsalpinus had arranged plants by the number of flowers on the same stalk, he would have separated individuals of the same species; if he had distributed them according to the number of leaflets which compose the leaves, he would have had to place far asunder different species of the same genus. Or, as he himself says[16], "If we make one genus of those which have a round root, as rapum, aristolochia, cyclaminus, aton, we shall separate from this genus those which most agree with it, as napum and raphanum, which resemble rapum, and the long aristolochia, which resembles the round; while we shall join the most remote kinds, for the nature of cyclaminus and rapum is altogether diverse in all other respects. Or if we attend to the differences of stalk, so as to make one genus of those which have a naked stalk, as the junci, cæpe, aphacæ, along with cicoraceæ, violæ, we shall still connect the most unlike things, and disjoin the closest affinities. And if we note the differences of leaves, or even flowers, we fall into the same difficulty; for many plants very different in kind have leaves very similar, as polygonum and hypericium, ernea and sesamois, apium and ranunculus; and plants of the same genus have sometimes very different leaves, as the several species of ranunculus and of lactuca. Nor will colour or shape of

[16] Lib. i. cap. xii. p. 25.

the flowers help us better; for what has vitis in common with œnanthe, except the resemblance of the flower?" He then goes on to say, that if we seek a too close coincidence of all the characters we shall have no species: and thus shows us that he had clearly before his view the difficulty which he had to attack, and which it is his glory to have overcome, that of constructing natural orders.

But as the principles of Cæsalpinus are justified, on the one hand, by their leading to *natural orders*, they are recommended on the other by their producing a *system* which applies through the whole extent of the vegetable kingdom. The parts from which he takes his characters must occur in all flowering-plants, for all such plants have seeds. And these seeds, if not very numerous for each flower, will be of a certain definite number and orderly distribution. And thus every plant will fall into one part or other of the same system.

It is not difficult to point out, in this induction of Cæsalpinus, the two elements which we have so often declared must occur in all inductive processes; the exact acquaintance with *facts*, and the general and applicable *ideas* by which these facts are brought together. Cæsalpinus was no mere dealer in intellectual relations or learned traditions, but a laborious and persevering collector of plants and of botanical knowledge. "For many years," he says in his dedication, "I have been pursuing my researches in various regions, habitually visiting the places in which grew the various kinds of herbs, shrubs, and trees; I

have been assisted by the labours of many friends, and by gardens established for the public benefit, and containing foreign plants collected from the most remote regions." He here refers to the first garden directed to the public study of botany, which was that of Pisa[17], instituted in 1543, by order of the Grand Duke Cosmo the First. The management of it was confided first to Lucas Ghini, and afterwards to Cæsalpinus. He had collected also an herbarium of dried plants, which he calls the rudiment of his work. "Tibi enim," he says, in his dedication to Francis Medici, Grand Duke of Etruria, "apud quem extat ejus rudimentum ex plantis libro agglutinatis a me compositum." And, throughout, he speaks with the most familiar and vivid acquaintance of the various vegetables which he describes.

But Cæsalpinus also possessed fixed and general views concerning the relation and functions of the parts of plants, and ideas of symmetry and system, without which, as we see in other botanists of his and succeeding times, the mere accumulation of a knowledge of details does not lead to any advance in science. We have already mentioned his reference to general philosophical principles, both of the Peripatetics and of his own. The first twelve chapters of his work are employed in explaining the general structure of plants, and especially that point to which he justly attaches so much importance, the results of the different situation of the *cor* or *corculum* of the seed. He shows[18] that if we take the

[17] Cuv. 187. [18] Lib. i. cap. xii.

root, or stem, or leaves, or blossom, as our guide in classification, we shall separate plants obviously alike, and approximate those which have merely superficial resemblances. And thus we see that he had in his mind ideas of fixed resemblance and symmetrical distribution, which he sedulously endeavoured to apply to plants; while his acquaintance with the vegetable kingdom, enabled him to see in what manner they were not, and in what manner they were, really applicable.

The great merit and originality of Cæsalpinus have been generally allowed, by the best of the more modern writers on botany. Linnæus calls him one of the founders of the science; "Primus verus systematicus[19];" and, as if not satisfied with the expression of his admiration in prose, hangs a poetical garland on the tomb of his hero; the following distich concludes his remarks:

> Quisquis hic extiterit primos concedet honores
> Cæsalpine tibi; primaque serta dabit:

and similar language of praise has been applied to him by the best botanists up to Cuvier[20], who justly terms his book "a work of genius."

Perhaps the great advance made in this science by Cæsalpinus, is most strongly shown by this; that no one appeared, to follow the path which he had opened to system and symmetry, for nearly a century. Moreover, when the progress of this branch of knowledge was resumed, his next successor, Morison, did

[19] Philosoph. Bot. p. 19. [20] Cuv. Hist. 193.

not choose to acknowledge that he had borrowed so much from so old a writer; and thus, never mentions his name, although he takes advantage of his labours, and even transcribes his words without acknowledgment, as I shall show. The pause between the great invention of Cæsalpinus, and its natural sequel, the developement and improvement of his method, is so marked, that I will, in order to avoid too great an interruption of chronological order, record some of its circumstances in a separate section.

Sect. 3.—Stationary Interval.

THE method of Cæsalpinus was not, at first, generally adopted. It had, indeed, some disadvantages. Employed in drawing the boundary-lines of the larger divisions of the vegetable kingdom, he had omitted those smaller groups, genera, which were both most obvious to common botanists, and most convenient in the description and comparison of plants. He had also neglected to give the synonyms of other authors for the plants spoken of by him; an appendage to botanical descriptions, which the increase of botanical information and botanical books had now rendered indispensable. And thus it happened, that a work, which must always be considered as forming a great epoch in the science to which it refers, was probably little read, and in a short time could be treated as if it were quite forgotten.

In the mean time, the science was gradually improved in its details. Clusius, or Charles de l'Ecluse, first taught botanists to describe well. "Before him,'

says Mirbel[21], "the descriptions were diffuse, obscure, indistinct; or else concise, incomplete, vague. Clusius introduced exactitude, precision, neatness, elegance, method: he says nothing superfluous; he omits nothing necessary." He travelled over great part of Europe, and published various works on the more rare of the plants which he had seen. Among such plants, we may note one now well known, the potato; which he describes as being commonly used in Italy in 1586[22]; thus throwing doubt, at least, on the opinion which ascribes the first introduction of it into Europe to Sir Walter Raleigh, on his return from Virginia, about the same period. As serving to illustrate, both this point, and the descriptive style of Clusius, I quote, in a note, his description of the flower of this plant[23].

[21] Physiol, Veg. p. 525. [22] Clusius. Exotic. iv. c. 52, p. lxxix.

[23] "Papas Peruanorum. Arachidna, Theoph. forte. Flores elegantes, uncialis amplitudinis aut majores, angulosi, singulari folio constantes, sed ita complicato ut quinque folia discreta videantur, coloris exterius ex purpura candicantis, interius purpurascentis, radiis quinque herbaceis ex umbilico stellæ instar prodeuntibus, et totidem staminibus flavis in umbonem coeuntibus."

He says that the Italians do not know whence they had the plant, and that they call it *Taratouffli*. The name potato was, in England, previously applied to the sweet potato (*Convolvulus batatas*), which was the *common* potato, in distinction to the *Virginian* potato, at the time of Gerard's Herbal. (1597?) Gerard's figures of both plants are copied from those of Clusius.

It may be seen by the description of Arachidna already quoted from Theophrastus, (p. 263,) that there is little plausibility in Clusius's conjecture of the plant being known to the ancients. I need not inform the botanist that this opinion is untenable.

The addition of exotic species to the number of known plants was indeed going on rapidly during the interval which we are now considering. Francis Hernandez, a Spaniard, who visited America towards the end of the sixteenth century, collected and described many plants of that country, some of which were afterwards published by Recchi[24], Barnabas Cobo, who went as a missionary to America in 1596, also described plants[25]. The Dutch, among other exertions which they made in their struggle with the tyranny of Spain, sent out an expedition which, for a time, conquered the Brazils; and among other fruits of this conquest, they published an account of the natural history of the country[26]. To avoid interrupting the connexion of such labours, I will here carry them on a little further in the order of time. Paul Herman, of Halle, in Saxony, went to the Cape of Good Hope and to Ceylon; and on his return, astonished the botanists of Europe by the vast quantity of remarkable plants which he introduced to their knowledge[27]. Rheede, the Dutch governor of Malabar, ordered descriptions and drawings to be made of many curious species, which were published in a large work in twelve folio volumes[28]. Rumphe,

[24] Nova Plantarum Regni Mexicani Historia, Rom. 1651, fol.

[25] Sprengel, Gesch. der Botanik, ii. 62.

[26] Historia Naturalis Brasiliæ, L. B. 1648, fol. (Piso and Marcgraf.)

[27] Museum Zeylanicum, L. B. 1726.

[28] Hortus Malabaricus, 1670—1703.

another Dutch consul at Amboyna[29], laboured with zeal and success upon the plants of the Moluccas. Some species which occur in Madagascar figured in a description of that island composed by the French Commandant Flacourt[30]. Shortly afterwards, Engelbert Kæmpfer[31], a Westphalian of great acquirements and undaunted courage, visited Persia, Arabia Felix, the Mogul Empire, Ceylon, Bengal, Sumatra, Java, Siam, Japan; Wheler travelled in Greece and Asia Minor; and Sherard, the English consul, published an account of the plants of the neighbourhood of Smyrna.

At the same time, the New World excited also the curiosity of botanists. Hans Sloane collected the plants of Jamaica; John Banister those of Virginia; William Vernon, also an Englishman, and David Kriege, a Saxon, those of Maryland; two Frenchmen, Surian and Father Plumier, those of Saint Domingo.

We may add that public botanical gardens were about this time established all over Europe. We have already noticed the institution of that of Pisa in 1543; the second was that of Padua in 1545; the next, that of Florence in 1556; the fourth, that of Bologna, 1568; that of Rome, in the Vatican, dates also from 1568.

The first transalpine garden of this kind arose at Leyden in 1577; that of Leipsic in 1580. Henry

[29] Herbarium Amboinense, Amsterdam, 1741—51, fol.
[30] Histoire de la grande Isle Madagascar, Paris, 1661.
[31] Amœnitates Exoticæ, Lemgov. 1712. 4to.

the Fourth of France established one at Montpellier in 1597. Several others were instituted in Germany; but that of Paris did not begin to exist till 1626; that of Upsal, afterwards so celebrated, took its rise in 1657, that of Amsterdam in 1684. Morison, whom we shall soon have to mention, calls himself, in 1680, the first director of the Botanical Garden at Oxford.

In the mean time, although there appeared no new system which commanded the attention of the botanical world, the feeling of the importance of the affinities of plants became continually more strong and distinct.

Lobel, who was botanist to James the First, and who published his "Stirpium Adversaria Nova" in 1571, brings together the natural families of plants more distinctly than his predecessors, and even distinguishes (as Cuvier states[32],) monocotyledonous from dicotyledonous plants; one of the most comprehensive division-lines of botany, of which succeeding times discovered the value more completely. Fabius Columna[33], in 1616, gave figures of the fructification of plants on copper, as Gessner had before done on wood. But the elder Bauhin (John), notwithstanding all that Cæsalpinus had done, retrograded, in a work published in 1619, into the less precise and scientific distinctions of—trees with nuts; with berries; with acorns; with pods; creeping plants, gourds, &c.: and no clear progress towards a

[32] Cuv. Leçons, &c. 198.

[33] Ib. 206.

system was anywhere visible among the authors of this period.

While this continued to be the case, and while the materials, thus destitute of order, went on accumulating, it was inevitable that the evils which Cæsalpinus had endeavoured to remedy, should become more and more grievous. "The nomenclature of the subject"[84] was in such disorder, it was so impossible to determine with certainty the plants spoken of by preceding writers, that thirty or forty different botanists had given to the same plant almost as many different names. Bauhin called by one appellation, a species which Lobel or Matthioli designated by another. There was an actual chaos, a universal confusion, in which it was impossible for men to find their way." We can the better understand such a state of things, from having, in our own time, seen another classificatory science, mineralogy, in the very condition thus described. For such a state of confusion there is no remedy but the establishment of a true system of classification; which by its real foundation, shall render a reason for the place of each species; and which by the fixity of its classes, affords a basis for a standard nomenclature, as finally took place in botany. But before such a remedy is obtained, men naturally try to alleviate the evil by tabulating the synonyms of different writers, as far as they are able to do so. The task of constructing such a *Synonymy* of botany at the period of which we speak, was undertaken by Gas-

[84] Cuv. 212.

pard Bauhin, the brother of John, but nineteen years younger. This work, the "Pinax Theatri Botanici," was printed at Basil in 1623. It was a useful undertaking at the time; but the want of any genuine order in the "Pinax" itself, rendered it impossible that it should be of great permanent utility.

After this period, the progress of almost all the sciences became languid for a while; and one reason of this interruption was, the wars and troubles which prevailed over almost the whole of Europe. The quarrels of Charles the First and his parliament, the civil wars, the usurpation, in England; in France, the war of the league, the stormy reign of Henry the Fourth, the civil wars of the minority of Louis the Thirteenth, the war against the Protestants and the war of the Fronde, in the minority of Louis the Fourteenth; the bloody and destructive Thirty Years' War in Germany; the war of Spain with the United Provinces and with Portugal;—all these dire agitations left men neither leisure nor disposition to direct their best thoughts to the promotion of science. The baser spirits were brutalised; the better were occupied by high practical aims and struggles of their moral nature. Amid such storms, the intellectual powers of man could not work with their due calmness, nor his intellectual objects shine with their proper lustre.

At length a period of greater tranquillity gleamed forth, and the sciences soon expanded in the sunshine. Botany was not inert amid this activity, and

rapidly advanced in a new direction, that of physiology; but before we speak of this portion of our subject, we must complete what we have to say of it as a classificatory science.

Sect. 4.—*Sequel to the Epoch of Cæsalpinus. Further Formation and Adoption of Systematic Arrangement.*

Soon after the period of which we now speak, that of the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne of England, systematic arrangements of plants appeared in great numbers; and in a manner such as to show the minds of botanists had gradually been ripening for this improvement, through the influence of preceding writers, and the growing acquaintance with plants. The person whose name is usually placed first on this list, Robert Morison, appears to me to be much less meritorious than many of those who published very shortly after him; but I will give him the precedence in my narrative. He was a Scotchman, who was wounded fighting on the royalist side in the civil wars of England. On the triumph of the republicans, he withdrew to France, when he became director of the garden of Gaston, Duke of Orléans, at Blois; and there he came under the notice of our Charles the Second; who, on his restoration, summoned Morison to England, where he became superintendent of the royal gardens, and also of the botanic garden at Oxford. In 1669, he published "Remarks on the Mistakes of the two Bauhins," in which he proves that many plants in

the "Pinax" are erroneously placed, and shows considerable talent for appreciating natural families and genera. His great systematic work appeared from the University press at Oxford in 1680. It contains a system, but a system, Cuvier says[35], which approaches rather to a natural method than to a rigorous distribution, like that of his predecessor Cæsalpinus, or that of his successor Ray. Thus the herbaceous plants are divided into *climbers*, *leguminous*, *siliquose*, *unicapsular*, *bicapsular*, *tricapsular*, *quadricapsular*, *quinquecapsular*, combined with characters derived from the number of petals. But along with these numerical elements, are introduced others of a loose and heterogeneous kind, for instance, the classification of herbs as *lactescent* and *emollient*. It is not unreasonable to say, that such a scheme shows no talent for constructing a complete system; and that the most distinct part of it, that dependent on the fruit, was probably borrowed from Cæsalpinus. That this is so, we have, I think, strong proof; for though Morison no where, I believe, mentions Cæsalpinus, except in one place in a loose enumeration of botanical writers[37], he must have made considerable use of his work. For he has introduced into his own preface a passage copied literally[37] from the dedication of Cæsalpinus; which passage we have already quoted (p. 282,) beginning, "Since all science consists in the collection of similar, and the distinction of dissimilar things." And that the mention of the

[35] Cuv. Leçons, &c. p. 486. [36] Pref. p. i. [37] Ib. p. ii.

original is not omitted by accident, appears from this; that Morison appropriates also the conclusion of the passage, which has a personal reference, "*Conatus sum id præstare in universa plantarum historia, ut si quid pro ingenii mei tenuitate in hujusmodi studio profecerim, ad communem utilitatem proferrem.*" That Morison, thus, at so long an interval after the publication of the work of Cæsalpinus, borrowed from him without acknowledgment, and adopted his system so as to mutilate it, proves that he had neither the temper nor the talent of a discoverer; and justifies us withholding from him the credit which belongs to those who, in his time, resumed the great undertaking of constructing a vegetable system.

Among those whose efforts in this way had the greatest and earliest influence, was undoubtedly our countryman, John Ray, who was fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, at the same time with Isaac Newton. But though Cuvier states[38] that Ray was the model of the systematists during the whole of the eighteenth century, the Germans claim a part of his merit for one of their countrymen, Joachim Jung, of Lubeck, professor at Hamburg[39]. Concerning the principles of this botanist, little was known during his life. But a manuscript of his book was communicated[40] to Ray in 1660, and from this time forwards, says Sprengel, there might be

[38] Leçons Hist. Sc. p. 487. [39] Sprengel, ii. 27.

[40] Ray acknowledges this in his *Index Plant. agri Cantab* p. 87, and quotes from it the definition of *caulis*.

noticed in the writings of Englishmen, those better and clearer views to which Jung's principles gave birth. Five years after the death of Jung, his *Doxoscopia Physica* was published, in 1662; and in 1678, his *Isagoge Phytoscopica.* But neither of these works was ever much read; and even Linnæus, whom few things escaped which concerned botany, had, in 1771, seen none of Jung's works.

I here pass over Jung's improvements of botanical language, and speak only of those which he is asserted to have suggested in the arrangement of plants. He examines, says Sprengel[41], the value of characters of species, which, he holds, must not be taken from the thorns, nor from colour, taste, smell, medicinal effects, time and place of blossoming. He shows, in numerous examples, what plants must be separated, though called by a common name, and what must be united, though their names are several.

I do not see in this much that interferes with the originality of Ray's method[42], of which, in consequence of the importance ascribed to it by Cuvier, as we have already seen, I shall give an account, following that great naturalist[43]. I confine myself to the ordinary plants, and omit the more obscure vegetables, as mushrooms, mosses, ferns, and the like.

Such plants are *composite* or *simple.* The *composite*

[41] Sprengel, ii. 29.

[42] Methodus Plantarum Nova, 1682. Historia Plantarum, 1686.

[43] Cuv. Leçons Hist. Sc. Nat. 488.

flowers are those which contain many florets in the same *calyx*[44]. These are subdivided according as they are composed altogether of complete florets, or of half florets, or of a centre of complete florets, surrounded by a circumference or ray of demiflorets. Such are the divisions of the *corymbiferæ*, or compositæ.

In the *simple* flowers, the seeds are *naked*, or in a *pericarp*. Those with *naked* seeds are arranged according to the number of the seeds, which may be one, two, three, four, or more. If there is only one, no subdivision is requisite: if there are two, Ray makes a subdivision, according as the flower has five petals, or a continuous corolla. Here we come to several natural families. Thus, the flowers with two seeds and five petals are the *umbelliferous* plants; the monopetalous flowers with two seeds are the *stellatæ*. He founds the division of four-seeded flowers on the circumstance of the leaves being opposite, or alternate; and thus again, we have the natural families of *asperifoliæ*, as *echium*, &c., which have the leaves alternate, and the *verticillatæ*, as *salvia*, in which the leaves are opposite. When the flower has more than four seeds, he makes no subdivision.

So much for simple flowers with naked seeds. In those where the seeds are surrounded by a *pericarp*, or fruit, this fruit is large, soft, and fleshy, and the plants are *pomiferous;* or it is small and juicy, and the fruit is a berry, as a gooseberry.

[44] Involucrum, in modern terminology.

If the fruit is not juicy, but *dry*, it is multiple or simple. If it be simple, we have the *leguminose* plants. If it be multiple, the form of the flower is to be attended to. The flower may be *monopetalous*, or *tetrapetalous*, or *pentapetalous*, or with still *more* divisions. The monopetalous may be *regular* or *irregular*; so may the tetrapetalous. The regular tetrapetalous flowers are, for example, the *Cruciferæ*, as stock, and cauliflower: the irregular, are the *papilionaceous* plants, peas, beans, and vetches; and thus we again come to natural families. The remaining plants are divided in the same way, into those with *imperfect*, and those with *perfect*, flowers. Those with *imperfect* flowers are the *grasses*, the *rushes* (*junci*), and the like; among those with *perfect* flowers, are the *palmaceæ*, and the *liliaceæ*.

We see that the division of plants is complete as a system; all flowers must belong to one or other of the divisions. Fully to explain the characters and further subdivisions of these families, would be to write a treatise on botany; but it is easily seen that they exhaust the subject as far as they go.

Thus Ray constructed his system partly on the fruit and partly on the flower; or more properly, according to the expression of Linnæus, comparing his earlier with his later system, he began by being a *fructicist*, and ended by being a *corollist*[45].

[45] Ray was a most industrious herbalizer, and I cannot understand on what ground Mirbel asserts (Phys. Veg. t. ii. p. 531,) that he was better acquainted with books than with plants.

As we have said, a number of systems of arrangement of plants were published about this time, some founded on the fruit, some on the corrolla, some on the calyx, and these employed in various ways. Rivinus[46] (whose real name was Bachman,) classified by the flower alone; instead of combining it with the fruit, as Ray had done[47]. He had the further merit, of being the first who rejected the old division, of woody, and herbaceous plants; a division which, though at variance with any system founded upon the structure of the plant, was employed even by Tournefort, and only finally expelled by Linnæus.

It would throw little light upon the history of botany, especially for our purpose, to dwell on the peculiarities of these transitory systems. Linnæus[48], after his manner, has given a classification of them. Rivinus, as we have just seen, was a *corollist*, according to the regularity and number of the petals; Hermann was a *fructicist*. Christopher Knaut[49] adopted the system of Ray, but inverted the order of its parts; Christian Knaut did nearly the same with regard to that of Rivinus, taking number before regularity in the flower[50].

Of the systems which prevailed previous to that of Linnæus, Tournefort's was by far the most generally accepted. Joseph Pitton de Tournefort was of a noble family in Provence, and was appointed pro-

[46] Cuv. Leçons, 491.
[47] Historia Generalis ad rem Herbariam, 1690.
[48] Philos. Bot. p. 21.
[49] Enumeratio Plantarum, &c., 1687.
[50] Linn.

fessor at the Jardin du Roi in 1683. His well-known travels in the Levant are interesting on other subjects, as well as botany. His *Institutio Rei Herbariæ*, published in 1700, contains his method, which is that of a *corollist*. He is guided by the regularity or irregularity of the flowers, by their form, and by the situation of the receptacle of the seeds below the calyx, or within it. Thus his classes are—those in which the flowers are *campaniform*, or bell-shaped; those in which they are *infundibuliform*, or funnel-shaped, as tobacco; then the irregular flowers, as the *personatæ*, which resemble an ancient mask; the *labiatæ*, with their two lips; the *cruciform*; the *rosaceæ*, with flowers like a rose; the *umbelliferæ*; the *caryophylleæ*, as the pink; the *liliaceæ*, with six petals, as the tulip, narcissus, hyacinth, lily; the *papilionaceæ*, which are leguminous plants, the flower of which resembles a butterfly, as peas and beans; and finally, the *anomalous*, as violet, nasturtium, and others.

Though this system was found to be attractive, as depending, in an evident way, on the most conspicuous part of the plant, the flower, it is easy to see that it was much less definite than systems like that of Rivinus, Hermann, and Ray, which were governed by number. But Tournefort succeeded in giving to the characters of genera a degree of rigour never before attained, and abstracted them in a separate form. We have already seen that the reception of botanical systems has depended much on their arrangement into genera.

Tournefort's success was also much promoted by

the author inserting in his work a figure of a flower and fruit belonging to each genus; and the figures, drawn by Aubriet, were of great merit. The study of botany was thus rendered easy, for it could be learned by turning over the leaves of a book. In spite of various defects, these advantages gave him an ascendency which lasted, from 1700, when his book appeared, for more than half a century. For though Linnæus began to publish in 1735, his method and his nomenclature were not generally adopted till 1760.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REFORM OF LINNÆUS.

Sect. 1.—*Introduction of the Reform.*

ALTHOUGH, perhaps, no man of science ever exercised a greater sway than Linnæus, or had more enthusiastic admirers, the most intelligent botanists always speak of him, not as a great discoverer, but as a judicious and strenuous *Reformer*. Indeed, in his own lists of botanical writers, he places himself among the "Reformatores;" and it is apparent that this is the nature of his real claim to admiration; for the doctrine of the sexes of plants, even if he had been the first to establish it, was a point of botanical physiology, a province of the science which no one would select as the peculiar field of Linnæus's glory; and the formation of a system of arrangement on the basis of this doctrine, though attended with many advantages, was not an improvement of any higher order than those introduced by Ray and Tournefort. But as a reformer of the state of natural history in his time, Linnæus was admirable for his skill, and unparalleled in his success. And we have already seen, in the instance of the reform of mineralogy, as attempted by Mohs and Berzelius, that men of great

talents and knowledge may fail in such an undertaking.

It is, however, only by means of the knowledge which he displays, and of the beauty and convenience of the improvements which he proposes, that any one can acquire such an influence as to procure his suggestions to be adopted. And even if original circumstances of birth or position could invest any one with peculiar prerogatives and powers in the republic of science, Karl Linné began his career with no such advantages. His father was a poor curate in Smaland, a province of Sweden; his boyhood was spent in poverty and privation; it was with great difficulty that, at the age of twenty-one, he contrived to subsist at the University of Upsal, whither a strong passion for natural history had urged him. Here, however, he was so far fortunate, that Olaus Rudbeck, the professor of botany, committed to him the care of the Botanic Garden[1]. The perusal of the works of Vaillant and Patrick Blair suggested to him the idea of an arrangement of plants, formed upon the sexual organs, the stamens and pistils; and of such an arrangement he published a sketch in 1731, at the age of twenty-four.

But we must go forwards a few years in his life, to come to the period to which his most important works belong. University and family quarrels induced him to travel; and, after various changes of scene, he was settled in Holland, as the curator of the splendid botanical garden of George Clifford, an

[1] Sprengel, ii. 232.

opulent banker. Here it was[a] that he laid the foundation of his future greatness. In the two years of his residence at Harlecamp, he published nine works. The first, the *Systema Naturæ*, which contained a comprehensive sketch of the whole domain of natural history, excited general astonishment, by the acuteness of the observations, the happy talent of combination, and the clearness of the systematic views. Such a work could not fail to procure considerable respect for its author. His *Hortus Cliffortianus* and *Musa Cliffortiana* added to this impression. The weight which he had thus acquired, he proceeded to use for the improvement of botany. His *Fundamenta Botanica* and *Bibliotheca Botanica* appeared in 1736; his *Critica Botanica* and *Genera Plantarum* in 1737: his *Classes Plantarum* in 1738; his *Species Plantarum* was not published till 1753; and all these works appeared in many successive editions, materially modified.

This circulation of his works showed that his labours were producing their effect. His reputation grew; and he was soon enabled to exert a personal, as well as a literary, influence, on students of natural history. He became Botanist Royal, President of the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, and Professor in the University of Upsal; and this office he held for thirty-six years with unrivalled credit; exercising, by means of his lectures, his constant publications, and his conversation, an extraordinary power

[a] Sprengel, ii. 234.

over a multitude of zealous naturalists, belonging to every part of the world.

In order to understand more clearly the nature and effect of the reforms introduced by Linnæus into botany, I shall consider them under the four following heads:—*Terminology*, *Nomenclature*, *Artificial System*, and *Natural System*.

Sect. 2.—*Linnæan Reform of Botanical Terminology.*

It must be recollected that I designate as *Terminology*, the system of *terms* employed in the *description* of objects of natural history; while by *Nomenclature*, I mean the collection of the *names* of *species*. The reform of the descriptive part of botany was one of the tasks first attempted by Linnæus; and his terminology was the instrument by which his other improvements were effected.

Though most readers, probably, entertain, at first, a persuasion that a writer ought to content himself with the use of common words in their common sense, and feel a repugnance to technical terms and arbitrary rules of phraseology, as pedantic and troublesome; it is soon found, by the student of any branch of science, that, without technical terms and fixed rules, there can be no certain or progressive knowledge. The loose and infantine grasp of common language cannot hold objects steadily enough for scientific examination, or lift them from one stage of generalisation to another. They must be secured by the rigid mechanism of a scientific phraseology.

This necessity had been felt in all the sciences, from the earliest periods of their progress. But the conviction had never been acted upon so as to produce a distinct and adequate descriptive botanical language. Jung, indeed[3], had already attempted to give rules and precepts which should answer this purpose; but it was not till the *Fundamenta Botanica* appeared, that the science could be said to possess a fixed and complete terminology.

To give an account of such a terminology, is, in fact, to give a description of a dictionary and grammar, and therefore cannot here be done in detail. Linnæus's work contains about a thousand terms or which the meaning and application are distinctly explained; and rules are given, by which, in the use of such terms, the botanist may avoid all obscurity, ambiguity, unnecessary prolixity and complexity, and even inelegance and barbarism. Of course the greater part of the words which Linnæus thus recognised, had previously existed in botanical writers; and many of them had been defined with technical precision. Thus Jung[4] had already explained what was a *composite*, what a *pinnate* leaf; what kind of a bunch of flowers is a *spike*, a *panicle*, an *umbel*, a *corymb*, respectively. Linnæus extended such distinctions, retaining complete clearness in their separation. Thus, with him, composite leaves are further distinguished as *digitate*, *pinnate*, *bipinnate*, *pedate*, and so on; pinnate leaves are *abruptly* so, or *with an odd* one, or *with a tendril;* they are

[3] *Isagoge Phytoscopica*, 1679. [4] Sprengel, ii. 28.

pinnate *oppositely*, *alternately*, *interruptedly*, *articulately*, *decursively*. Again, the *inflorescence*, as the mode of assemblage of the flowers is called, may be a *tuft*, (fasciculus,) a *head*, (capitulum,) a *cluster*, (racemus,) a *bunch*, (thyrsus,) a *panicle*, a *spike*, a *catkin*, (amentum,) a *corymb*, an *umbel*, a *cyme*, a *whorl*, (verticillus.) And the rules which he gives, though often apparently arbitrary and needless, are found, in practice, to be of great service by their fixity and connexion. By the good fortune of having had a teacher with so much delicacy of taste as Linnæus, in a situation of so much influence, Botany possesses a descriptive language which will long stand as a model for all other subjects.

It may, perhaps, appear to some persons, that such a terminology as we have here described must be enormously cumbrous; and that, since the terms are arbitrarily invested with their meaning, the invention of them requires no knowledge of nature. With respect to the former doubt, we may observe, that technical description is, in reality, the only description which is clearly intelligible; but that technical language cannot be understood without being learnt as any other language is learnt; that is, the reader must connect the terms immediately with his own sensations and notions, and not mediately, through a verbal explanation; he must not have to guess their meaning, or to discover it by a separate act of interpretation into more familiar language as often as they occur. The language of botany must be the botanist's most familiar tongue. When the student has thus learnt to *think* in botanical lan-

guage, it is no idle distinction to tell him that a *bunch* of grapes is not a *cluster*; that is, a thyrsus not a raceme. And the terminology of botany is then felt to be a useful implement, not an oppressive burden. It is only the schoolboy that complains of the irksomeness of his grammar and vocabulary. The accomplished student possesses them without effort or inconvenience.

As to the other question, whether the construction of such a botanical grammar and vocabulary implies an extensive and accurate acquaintance with the facts of nature, no one can doubt who is familiar with any descriptive science. It is true, that a person might construct an arbitrary scheme of distinctions and appellations, with no attention to natural objects; and this is what shallow and self-confident persons often set about doing, in some branch of knowledge with which they are imperfectly acquainted. But the slightest attempt to use such a phraseology leads to confusion; and any continued use of it leads to its demolition. Like a garment which does not fit us, if we attempt to work in it we tear it in pieces.

The formation of a good descriptive language is, in fact, an inductive process of the same kind as those which we have already noticed in the progress of natural history. It requires the *discovery of fixed characters*, which discovery is to be marked and fixed, like other inductive steps, by appropriate *technical terms*. The characters must be so far fixed, that the things which they connect must have a more permanent and real association than the things which they

leave unconnected. If one bunch of grapes were really a racemus, and another a thyrsus, according to the definition of these terms, this part of the Linnæan language would lose its value; because it would no longer enable us to assert a general proposition with respect to one kind of plants.

Sect. 3.—*Linnæan Reform of Botanical Nomenclature.*

In the ancient writers each recognised kind of plants had a distinct name. The establishment of genera led to the practice of designating species by the name of the genus, with the addition of a phrase to distinguish the species. These phrases, (expressed in Latin in the ablative case,) were such as not only to mark, but to describe the species, and were intended to contain such features of the plant as were sufficient to distinguish it from others of the same genus. But in this way the designation of a plant often became a long and inconvenient assemblage of words. Thus different kinds of rose were described as,

Rosa campestris, spinis carens, biflora (*Rosa alpina.*)

Rosa aculeata, foliis odoratis subtus rubiginosis (*R. eglanteria.*)

Rosa carolina fragrans, foliis medio tenus serratis (*R. carolina.*)

Rosa sylvestris vulgaris, flore odorato incarnato (*R. canina.*)

and several others. The prolixity of these appellations, their variety in every different author, the insufficiency and confusion of the distinctions which

they contained, were felt as extreme inconveniences. The attempt of Bauhin to remedy this evil, by a Synonymy, had, as we have seen, failed at the time, for want of any directing principle; and was become still more defective by the lapse of years and the accumulation of fresh knowledge and new books. Haller had proposed to distinguish the species of each genus by the numbers 1, 2, 3, and so on; but botanists found that their memory could not deal with such arbitrary abstractions. The need of some better nomenclature was severely felt.

The remedy which Linnæus finally introduced was the use of *trivial* names; that is, the designation of each species by the name of the genus along with a *single* conventional word, imposed without any general rule. Such names are added above (p. 371,) in parentheses, to the specimens of the names previously in use. But though this remedy was found to be complete and satisfactory, and is now universally adopted in every branch of natural history, it was not one of the reforms which Linnæus at first proposed. Perhaps he did not at first see its full value; or, if he did, we may suppose that it required more self-confidence than he possessed, to set himself to introduce and establish ten thousand new names in the botanical world. Accordingly, the first attempts of Linnæus at the improvement of the nomenclature of botany were, the proposal of fixed and careful rules for the generic name, and for the descriptive phrase. Thus, in his *Critica Botanica*, he gives many precepts concerning the selection of the names of

genera, intended to secure convenience or elegance. For instance, that they are to be single words[5]; he substitutes *atropa* for *bella donna*, and *leontodon* for *dens leonis;* that they are not to depend upon the name of another genus[6], as *aquiviola, agrimonoides;* that they are not[7] to be "sesquipedalia;" and, says he, any word is sesquipedalian to me, which has more than twelve letters, as *kalophyllodendron*, for which he substitutes *calophyllon*. Though some of these rules may seem pedantic, there is no doubt that, taken all together, they tend exceedingly, like the labours of purists in other languages, to exclude extravagance, caprice, and barbarism in botanical speech.

The precepts which he gives for the matter of the "descriptive phrase," or, as it is termed in the language of the Aristotelian logicians, the "differentia," are, for the most part, results of the general rule, that the most fixed characters which can be found are to be used; this rule being interpreted according to all the knowledge of plants which had then been acquired. The language of the "phrase" was, of course, to be regulated by the rules of terminology, of which we have already spoken.

Thus, in the *Critica Botanica*, the name of a plant is considered as consisting of a generic *word* and a specific *phrase;* and these are, he says[8], the right and left hands of the plant. But he then speaks of another kind of name; the *trivial* name, which

[5] Phil. Bot., 224.
[6] Ib. 228, 229.
[7] Ib. 252.
[8] Ib. 266.

is opposed to the scientific. Such names were, he says[9], those of his predecessors, and especially of the most ancient of them. Hitherto[10] no rules had been given for their use. He manifestly, at this period, has small regard for them. "Yet," he says, "trivial names may, perhaps, be used on this account, —that the differentia often turns out too long to be convenient in common use, and may require change as new species are discovered. However," he continues, "in this work we set such names aside altogether, and attend only to the differentiæ."

Even in the *Species Plantarum*, the work which gave general currency to these trivial names, he does not seem to have yet dared to propose so great a novelty. They only stand in the margin of the work. "I have placed them there," he says in his preface, "that, without circumlocution, we may call every herb by a single name; I have done this without selection, which would require more time. And I beseech all sane botanists to avoid most religiously ever proposing a trivial name without a sufficient specific distinction, lest the science should fall into its former barbarism."

It cannot be doubted, that the general reception of these trivial names of Linnæus, as the current language among botanists, was due, in a very great degree, to the knowledge, care, and skill with which his characters, both of genera and of species, were constructed. The rigorous rules of selection and

[9] Phil. Bot., 261. [10] Ib. 260.

expression which are proposed in the *Fundementa Botanica* and *Critica Botanica*, he himself conformed to; and this scrupulosity was employed upon the results of immense labour. "In order that I might make myself acquainted with the species of plants," he says, in the preface to his work upon them, "I have explored the Alps of Lapland, the whole of Sweden, a part of Norway, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, England, France: I have examined the Botanical Gardens of Paris, Oxford, Chelsea, Harlecamp, Leyden, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Upsal, and others: I have turned over the Herbals of Burser, Hermann, Clifford, Burmann, Oldenland, Gronovius, Royer, Sloane, Sherard, Bobart, Miller, Tournefort, Vaillant, Jussieu, Surian, Beck, Brown, &c.: my dear disciples have gone to distant lands, and sent me plants from thence; Kerlen to Canada, Hasselquist to Egypt, Asbech to China, Toren to Surat, Solander to England, Alstrœmer to Southern Europe, Martin to Spitzbergen, Pontin to Malabar, Kœhler to Italy, Forskähl to the East, Lœfling to Spain, Montin to Lapland: my botanical friends have sent me many seeds and dried plants from various countries: Lagerström many from the East Indies, Gronovius most of the Virginian; Gmelin all the Siberian; Burmann those of the Cape." And in consistency with this habit of immense collection of materials, is his maxim[11], that "a person is a better botanist in proportion as he knows more species." It will easily be seen that this maxim, like Newton's declaration

[11] Phil. Bot. 259.

that discovery requires only patient thought, refers only to the exertions of which the man of genius is conscious; and leaves out of sight his peculiar endowments, which he does not see because they are part of his power of vision. With the taste for symmetry which dictated the *Critica Botanica*, and the talent for classification which appear in the *Genera Plantarum*, and the *Systema Naturæ*, a person must undoubtedly rise to higher steps of classificatory knowledge and skill, as he became acquainted with a greater number of facts.

The acknowledged superiority of Linnæus in the knowledge of the matter of his science, induced other persons to defer to him in what concerned its form; especially when his precepts were, for the most part, recommended strongly both by convenience and elegance. The trivial names of the *Species Plantarum* were generally received; and though some of the details may have been altered, the immense advantage of the scheme ensures its permanence.

Sect. 4.—*Linnæus's Artificial System.*

We have already seen, that, from the time of Cæsalpinus, botanists had been endeavouring to frame a systematic arrangement of plants. All such arrangements were necessarily both artificial and natural: they were artificial, inasmuch as they depended upon assumed principles, the number, form, and position of certain parts, by the application of which the whole vegetable kingdom was imperatively subdi-

vided; they were natural, inasmuch as the justification of this division was, that it brought together those plants which were naturally related. No system of arrangement, for instance, would have been tolerated which separated into distant parts of the plan the different species of the same genus. As far as the genera, at least, all systems are natural.

But beginning from this line, we may construct our systems with two opposite purposes, according as we endeavour to carry our assumed principle of division rigorously and consistently through the system, or as we wish to associate natural families of a wider kind than genera. The former propensity leads to an artificial, the latter to a natural method. Each is a *system* of *plants;* but in the first, the emphasis is thrown on the former word of the title, in the other, on the latter.

The strongest recommendation of an artificial system, (besides its approaching to a natural method,) is, that it shall be capable of easy use; for which purpose, the facts on which it depends must be apparent in their relations, and universal in their occurrence. The system of Linnæus, founded upon the number, position, and other circumstances of the stamina and pistils, the reproductive organs of the plants, possessed this merit in an eminent degree, as far as these characters are concerned; that is, as far as the *classes* and *orders*. In its further subdivision into genera, its superiority was mainly due to the exact observation and description, which

we have already had to notice as talents which Linnæus peculiarly possessed.

The Linnæan system of plants was more definite than that of Tournefort, which was governed by the corolla; for number is more definite than form. It was more readily employed than any of those which depend on the fruit, for the flower is a more obvious object, and more easily examined. Still, it can hardly be doubted, that the circumstance which gave the main currency to the system of Linnæus was, its physiological signification: it was the *Sexual System*. The relation of the parts to which it directed the attention, interested both the philosophical faculty and the imagination. And when, soon after the system had become familiar in our own country, the poet of *The Botanic Garden* peopled the bell of every flower with "Nymphs" and "Swains," his imagery was felt to be by no means forced and far-fetched.

The history of the doctrine of the sexes of plants, as a point of physiology, does not belong to this place; and the Linnæan system of classification need not be longer dwelt upon for our present purpose. I will only explain a little further what has been said, that it is, up to a certain point, a natural system. Several of Linnæus's classes are, in a great measure, natural associations, kept together in violation of his own artificial rule. Thus the class *Diadelphia*, in which, by the system, the filaments of the stamina should be bound together in two parcels, does, in fact, contain many genera which are *monadelphous;*

the filaments of the stamina all cohering so as to form one bundle only, as in *Genista, Spartium, Anthyllis, Lupinus,* &c. And why is this violation of rule? Precisely because these genera all belong to the natural tribe of Papilionaceous plants, which the author of the system could not prevail upon himself to tear asunder. Yet in other cases Linnæus was true to his system, to the injury of natural alliances, as he was, for instance, in another portion of this very tribe of *Papilionaceæ;* for there are plants which undoubtedly belong to the tribe, but which have ten separate stamens; and these he placed in the order *Decandria.* Upon the whole, however, he inclines rather to admit transgression of art than of nature.

The reason of this inclination was, that he rightly considered an artificial method as instrumental to the investigation of a natural one; and to this part of his views we now proceed.

Sect: 5.—*Linnæus's Views on a Natural Method.*

THE admirers of Linnæus, the English especially, were for some time in the habit of putting his sexual system in opposition to the natural method, which about the same time was attempted in France. And as they often appear to have imagined that the ultimate object of botanical methods was to know the names of plants, they naturally preferred the Swedish method, which is excellent as a *finder.* No person, however, who wishes to know botany as a

science, that is, as a body of general truths, can be content with making names his ultimate object. Such a person will be constantly and irresistibly led on to attempt to catch sight of the natural arrangement of plants, even before he discovers, as he will discover by pursuing such a course of study, that the knowledge of the natural arrangement is the knowledge of the essential construction and vital mechanism of plants. He will consider an artificial method as a means of arriving at a natural method. Accordingly, however much some of his followers may have overlooked this, it is what Linnæus himself always held and taught. And though what he executed with regard to this object was but little[12], the distinct manner in which he presented the relations of an artificial and natural method, may justly be looked upon as one of the great improvements which he introduced into the study of his science.

Thus in the *Classes Plantarum*, (1747,) he speaks of the difficulty of the task of discovering the natural orders, and of the attempts made by others. "Yet," he adds, "I too have laboured at this, have done something, have much still to do, and shall labour at the object as long as I live." He afterwards proposed sixty-seven orders, as the fragments of a natural method, always professing their imperfection[13]. And in others of his works[14] he lays down

[12] The natural orders which he proposed are a bare enumeration of genera, and have not been generally followed.

[13] Phil. Bot. p. 80.

[14] Genera Plantarum, 1764. See Prælect. in Ord. Nat. p. xlviii.

some antitheses on the subject after his manner. "The natural orders teach us the nature of plants; the artificial orders enable us to recognise plants. The natural orders, without a key, do not constitute a method; the method ought to be available without a master."

That extreme difficulty must attend the formation of a natural method, may be seen from the very indefinite nature of the aphorisms upon this subject which Linnæus has delivered, and which the best botanists of succeeding times have assented to. Such are these;—the natural orders must be formed by attention, not to one or two, but to *all* the parts of plants;—the same organs are of great importance in regulating the divisions of one part of the system, and of small importance in another part [15];—the character does not constitute the genus, but the genus the character;—the character is necessary, not to make the genus, but to recognise it. The vagueness of these maxims is easily seen; the rule of attending to all the parts, implies, that we are to estimate their relative importance, either by physiological considerations, (and these again lead to arbitrary rules, as, for instance, the superiority of the function of nutrition to that of reproduction,) or by a sort of latent naturalist instinct, which Linnæus in some passages seems to recognise. "The habit of a plant," he says [16], "must be secretly consulted. A practised botanist will distinguish, at the first glance, the plants

[15] Phil. Bot. p. 172.

[16] Ib. p. 171.

of different quarters of the globe, and yet will be at a loss to tell by what mark he detects them. There is, I know not what look, sinister, dry, obscure in African plants; superb and elevated, in the Asiatic; smooth and cheerful, in the American; stunted and indurated, in the Alpine."

Again, the rule that the same parts are of very different value in different orders, not only leaves us in want of rules or reasons which may enable us to compare the marks of different orders, but destroys the systematic completeness of the natural arrangement. If some of the orders be regulated by the flower and others by the fruit, we may have plants, of which the flower would place them in one order, and the fruit in another. The answer to this difficulty is the maxim already stated;—that no character *makes* the order; and that if a character do not enable us to recognise the order, it does not answer its purpose, and ought to be changed for another.

This doctrine, that the character is to be employed as a servant and not as a master, was a stumbling-block in the way of those disciples who looked only for dogmatical and universal rules. One of Linnæus's pupils, Paul Dietrich Giseke, has given us a very lively account of his own perplexity on having this view propounded to him, and of the way in which he struggled with it. He had complained of the want of intelligible grounds, in the collection of natural orders given by Linnæus. Linnæus[17] wrote

[17] Linnæi. Prælectionis, Pref. p. xv.

in answer, "You ask me for the characters of the natural orders: I confess I cannot give them." Such a reply naturally increased Giseke's difficulties. But afterwards, in 1771, he had the good fortune to spend some time at Upsal; and he narrates a conversation which he held with the great teacher on this subject, and which I think may serve to show the nature of the difficulty;—one by no means easily removed, and by the general reader, not even readily comprehended with distinctness. Giseke began by conceiving that an order *must* have that attribute from which its name is derived;—that the *Umbellatæ* must have their flower disposed in an umbel. The "mighty master" smiled[18], and told him not to look at names, but at nature. But (said the pupil) what is the use of the name, if it does not mean what it professes to mean? It is of small import (replied Linnæus) *what* you call the order, if you take a proper series of plants and give it some name, which is clearly understood to apply to the plants which you have associated. In such cases as you refer to, I followed the logical rule, of borrowing a name *a potiori*, from the principal member. Can you (he added) give me the character of any single order? *Giseke.* Surely, the character of the *Umbellatæ* is, that they have an umbel? *Linnæus.* Good; but there are plants which have an umbel, and are not of the *Umbellatæ*. *G.* I remember. We must therefore add, that they have two naked seeds. *L.* Then, *Echinophora*, which has

[18] "Subrisit ὁ πανυ."

only one seed, and *Eryngium*, which has not an umbel, will not be *Umbellatæ;* and yet they are of the order. *G.* I would place *Eryngium* among the *Aggregatæ*. *L.* No; both are beyond dispute *Umbellatæ*. *Eryngium* has an involucrum, five stamina, two pistils, &c. Try again for your character. *G.* I would transfer such plants to the end of the order, and make them form the transition to the next order. *Eryngium* would connect the *Umbellatæ* with the *Aggregatæ*. *L.* Ah! my good friend, the *transition* from order to order is one thing; the *character* of an order is another. The transitions I could indicate; but a character of a natural order is impossible. I will not give my reasons for the distribution of natural orders which I have published. You or some other person, after twenty or after fifty years, will discover them, and see that I was in the right.

I have given a portion of this curious conversation, in order to show that the attempt to establish natural orders leads to convictions which are out of the domain of the systematic grounds on which they profess to proceed. I believe the real state of the case to be, that the systematist, in such instances, is guided by an unformed and undeveloped apprehension of physiological functions. The ideas of the form, number and figure of parts are, in some measure, overshadowed and superseded by the rising perception of organic and vital relations; and the philosopher who aims at a natural method, while he is endeavouring merely to explore the apartment in which he had placed himself, that of arrangement, is led beyond

it, to a point where another light begins, though dimly, to be seen; he is brought within the influence of the ideas of organization and life.

The sciences which depend on these ideas will be the subject of our consideration hereafter. But what has been said, may perhaps serve to explain the acknowledged and inevitable imperfection of the unphysiological Linnæan attempts towards a natural method. "Artificial classes are," Linnæus says, "a substitute for natural, till natural are detected." But we have not yet a natural method. "Nor," he says, in the conversation above cited, "can we have a natural method; for a natural method implies natural classes and orders; and these orders must have characters." "And they," he adds, in another place[19], "who, though they cannot obtain a complete natural method, arrange plants according to the fragments of such a method, to the rejection of the artificial, seem to me like persons who pull down a convenient vaulted room, and set about building another, though they cannot turn the vault which is to cover it."

How far these considerations deterred other persons from turning their main attention to a natural method, we shall shortly see; but, in the mean time, we must complete the history of the Linnæan Reform.

[19] Gen. Plant. in Prælect. p. xii.

Sect. 6.—Reception and Diffusion of the Linnæan Reform.

We have already seen that Linnæus received, from his own country, honours and emoluments which mark his reputation as established, as early as 1740; and by his publications, his lectures, and his personal communications, he soon drew round him many disciples, whom he impressed strongly with his own doctrines and methods. It would seem, that the sciences of classification tend, at least in modern times, more than other sciences, to collect about the chair of the teacher a large body of zealous and obedient pupils; Linnæus and Werner were by far the most powerful heads of schools of any men who appeared in the course of the last century. Perhaps one reason of this is, that in these sciences, consisting of such an enormous multitude of species, of descriptive particulars, and of previous classifications, the learner is dependent upon the teacher more completely, and for a longer time, than in other subjects of speculation: he cannot so soon or so easily cast off the aid and influence of the master, to pursue reasonings and hypotheses of his own. Whatever the cause may be, the fact is, that the reputation and authority of Linnæus, in the latter part of his life, were immense. He enjoyed also royal favour, for the King and Queen of Sweden were both fond of natural history. In 1753, Linnæus received from the hand of his sovereign the knighthood of the

Polar Star, an honour which had never before been conferred for literary merit; and in 1756, was raised to the rank of Swedish nobility, by the title of Von Linné; and this distinction was confirmed by the Diet in 1762. He lived, honoured and courted, to the age of seventy-one; and in 1778 was buried in the cathedral of Upsal, with many testimonies of public respect and veneration.

De Candolle[20] assigns, as the causes of the success of the Linnæan system,—the specific names, the characteristic phrase, the fixation of descriptive language, the distinction of varieties and species, the extension of the method to all the kingdoms of nature, and the practice of introducing into it the species most recently discovered. This last course Linnæus constantly pursued; thus making his works the most valuable for matter, as they were the most convenient in form. The general diffusion of his methods over Europe may be dated, perhaps, a few years after 1760, when the tenth and the succeeding editions of the *Systema Naturæ* were in circulation, professing to include every species of organised beings. But his pupils and correspondents effected no less than his books, in giving currency to his system. In Germany[21], it was defended by Ludwig, Gesner, Fabricius. But Haller, whose reputation in physiology was as great as that of Linnæus in methodology, rejected it as too merely artificial. In France, it did not make any rapid or extensive progress: the best French botanists were at this time occupied with

[20] Théor. Elém. p. 40. [21] Sprengel, ii. 244.

the solution of the great problem of the construction of a natural method. And though the rhetorician Rousseau, charmed, we may suppose, with the elegant precision of the *Philosophia Botanica*, declared it to be the most philosophical work he had ever read in his life, Buffon and Adanson, describers and philosophers of a more ambitious school, felt a repugnance to the rigorous rules, and limited, but finished, undertakings of the Swedish naturalist. To resist his criticism and his influence, they armed themselves with dislike and contempt.

In England the Linnæan system was very favourably received:—perhaps the more favourably, for being a strictly artificial system. For the indefinite and unfinished form which almost inevitably clings to a natural method, appears to be peculiarly distasteful to our countrymen. It might seem as if the suspense and craving which comes with knowledge confessedly incomplete were so disagreeable to them, that they were willing to avoid it, at any rate whatever; either by rejecting system altogether, or by accepting a dogmatical system without reserve. The former has been their course in recent times with regard to Mineralogy; the latter was their proceeding with respect to the Linnæan Botany. It is in this country alone, I believe, that *Wernerian* and *Linnæan* Societies have been instituted. Such appellations somewhat remind us of the Aristotelian and Platonic schools of ancient Greece. In the same spirit it was, that the artificial system was at one time here considered, not as subsidiary and prepara-

tory to the natural orders, but as opposed to them. This was much as if the disposition of an army in a review should be considered as inconsistent with another arrangement of it in a battle.

When Linnæus visited England in 1736, Sloane, then the patron of natural history in this country, is said to have given him a cool reception, such as was perhaps most natural from an old man to a young innovator; and Dillenius, the professor at Oxford, did not accept the sexual system. But as Pulteney, the historian of English Botany, says, when his works became known, "the simplicity of the classical characters, the uniformity of the generic notes, all confined to the parts of the fructification, and the precision which marked the specific distinctions, merits so new, soon commanded the assent of the unprejudiced."

Perhaps the progress of the introduction of the Linnæan System into England will be best understood from the statement of T. Martyn, who was Professor of Botany in the University of Cambridge, from 1761 to 1825. "About the year 1750," he says[22], "I was a pupil of the school of our great countryman Ray; but the rich vein of knowledge, the profoundness and precision, which I remarked everywhere in the *Philosophia Botanica*, (published in 1751,) withdrew me from my first master, and I became a decided convert to that system of botany which has since been generally received. In 1753, the *Species Plantarum*, which first introduced the

[22] Pref. to Language of Botany, 3d edit. 1807.

specific names, made me a Linnæan completely." In 1763, he introduced the system in his lectures at Cambridge, and these were the first Linnæan lectures in England. Stillingfleet had already, in 1757, and Lee, in 1760, called the attention of English readers to Linnæus. Hill, in his *Flora Britannica*, published in 1760, had employed the classes and generic characters, but not the nomenclature; but the latter was adopted by Hudson, in 1762, in the *Flora Anglica*.

Two young Swedes, pupils of Linnæus, Dryander and Solander, settled in England, and were in intimate intercourse with the most active naturalists, especially with Sir Joseph Banks, of whom the former was librarian, and the latter a fellow traveller in Cook's celebrated voyage. James Edward Smith was also one of the most zealous disciples of Linnæus, during the life of the master; and after his death, purchased his Herbariums and Collections. It is related[28], as a curious proof of the high estimation in which Linnæus was held, that when the Swedish government heard of this bargain, they tried, though too late, to prevent these monuments of their countryman's labour and glory being carried from his native land, and even went so far as to send a frigate in pursuit of the ship which conveyed them to England. Smith had, however, the triumph of bringing them home in safety. On his death they were purchased by the Linnæan Society. Such relics

[28] Trapp's Transl. of Stower's Life of Linnæus, p. 314.

serve, as will easily be imagined, not only to warm the reverence of his admirers, but to illustrate his writings: and since they have been in this country, they have been the object of the pilgrimage of many a botanist, from every part of Europe.

I have purposely confined myself to the history of the Linnæan system in the cases in which it is most easily applicable, omitting all consideration of more obscure and disputed kinds of vegetables, as ferns, mosses, fungi, lichens, sea-weeds, and the like. The nature and progress of a classificatory science, which it is our main purpose to bring into view, will best be understood by attending, in the first place, to the cases in which such a science has been pursued with the most decided success; and the advances which have been made in the knowledge of the more obscure vegetables, are, in fact, advances in artificial classification, only in as far as they are advances in natural classification, and in physiology.

To these subjects we now proceed.

CHAPTER V.

PROGRESS TOWARDS A NATURAL SYSTEM OF BOTANY.

WE have already said, that the formation of a natural system of classification must result from a comparison of *all* the resemblances and differences of the things classed; but that, in acting upon this maxim, the naturalist is necessarily either guided by an obscure and instinctive feeling, which is, in fact, an undeveloped recognition of physiological relations, or else acknowledges physiology for his guide, though he is obliged to assume arbitrary rules in order to interpret its indications. Thus all natural classification of organized beings, either begins or soon ends in physiology; and can never advance far without the aid of that science. Still, the progress of the natural method in botany went to such a length before it was grounded entirely on the anatomy of plants, that it will be proper, and I hope instructive, to attempt a sketch of it here.

As I have already had occasion to remark, the earlier systems of plants were natural; and they only ceased to be so, when it appeared that the problem of constructing a *system* admitted of a very useful solution, while the problem of devising a *natural system* remained insoluble. But many botanists did not so easily renounce the highest object

of their science. In France, especially, a succession of extraordinary men laboured at it with no inconsiderable success: and they were seconded by worthy fellow-labourers in Germany and elsewhere.

The precept of taking into account all the parts of plants according to their importance, may be applied according to arbitrary rules. We may, for instance, assume that the fruit is the most important part; or we may make a long list of parts, and look for agreement in the greatest possible number of these, in order to construct our natural orders. The former course was followed by Gærtner[1]; the latter by Adanson. Gærtner's principles, deduced from the dissection of more than a thousand kinds of fruits[2], exercised, in the sequel, a great and permanent influence on the formation of natural classes. Adanson's attempt, bold and ingenious, belonged, both in time and character, to a somewhat earlier stage of the subject[3]. Enthusiastic and laborious beyond belief, but self-confident and contemptuous of the labours of others, Michel Adanson had collected, during five years spent in Senegal, an enormous mass of knowledge and materials; and had formed plans for the systems which he conceived himself thus empowered to reach, far beyond the strength and the lot of man[4]. In his *Families of Plants*, however, all agree that his labours were of real value to the science. The method which he followed is

[1] De Fructibus et Seminibus Plantarum. Stuttg. 1788—1791.
[2] Sprengel, ii. 290.
[3] Familles des Plantes, 1763.
[4] Cuvier's Eloge.

thus described by his eloquent and philosophical eulogist[5].

Considering each organ by itself, he formed, by pursuing its various modifications, a system of division, in which he arranged all known species according to that organ alone. Doing the same for another organ, and another, and so for many, he constructed a collection of systems of arrangement, each artificial,—each founded upon one assumed organ. The species which come together in all these systems are, of all, naturally the nearest to each other; those which are separated in a few of the systems, but contiguous in the greatest number, are naturally near to each other, though less near than the former; those which are separated in a greater number, are further removed from each other in nature; and they are the more removed, the fewer are the systems in which they are associated.

Thus, by this method, we obtain the means of estimating precisely the degree of natural affinity of all the species which our systems include, independent of a physiological knowledge of the influence of the organs. But the method has, Cuvier adds, the inconvenience of presupposing another kind of knowledge, which, though it belongs only to descriptive natural history, is no less difficult to obtain;—the knowledge, namely, of all species, and of all the organs of each. A single one neglected, may lead to relations the most false; and Adanson himself, in spite of the immense number of his observations, exemplifies this in some instances.

[5] Cuv. Eloges, tom. i. p. 282.

We may add, that in the division of the structure into organs, and in the estimation of the gradations of these in each artificial system, there is still room for arbitrary assumption.

In the mean time, the two Jussieus had presented to the world a "Natural Method," which produced a stronger impression than the "Universal Method" of Adanson. The first author of the system was Bernard de Jussieu, who applied it in the arrangement of the garden of the Trianon, in 1759, though he never published upon it. His nephew, Antoine Laurent de Jussieu, in his *Treatise of the Arrangement of the Trianon*[6], gave an account of the principles and orders of his uncle, which he adopted when he succeeded him; and, at a later period, published his *Genera Plantarum secundum Ordines Naturales disposita;* a work, says Cuvier, which perhaps forms as important an epoch in the sciences of observation, as the *Chimie* of Lavoisier does in the sciences of experiment. The object of the Jussieus was to obtain a system which should be governed by the natural affinities of the plants, while, at the same time, the characters by which the orders were ostensibly determined, should be as clear, simple, and precise, as those of the best artificial system. The main points in these characters were the number of the cotyledons, and the structure of the seed; and subordinate to this, the insertion of the stamina, which they distinguished as *epigynous*, *perigynous*, and *hypogynous*, according as they were

[6] Mém. Ac. P. 1774.

inserted over, about, or under, the germen. And the classes which were formed by the Jussieus, though they have since been modified by succeeding writers, have been so far retained by the most profound botanists, notwithstanding all the new care and new light which have been bestowed upon the subject, as to show that what was done at first, was a real and important step in the solution of the problem.

The merit of the formation of this natural method of plants must be divided between the two Jussieus. It has been common to speak of the nephew, Antoine Laurent, as only the publisher of his uncle's work[7]. But this appears, from a recent statement[8], to be highly unjust. Bernard left nothing in writing but the catalogues of the garden of the Trianon, which he had arranged according to his own views; but these catalogues consist merely of a series of names without explanation or reason added. The nephew, in 1773, undertook and executed for himself the examination of a natural family, the *Ranunculaceæ;* and he was wont to relate (as his son informs us) that it was this employment which first opened his eyes and rendered him a botanist. In the memoir which he wrote, he explained fully the relative importance of the characters of plants, and the subordination of some to others;—an essen-

[7] Prodromus Floræ Penins. Ind. Orient. Wight and Walker. Arnott, Introd. p. xxxv.

[8] By Adrien de Jussieu, son of Antoine Laurent, in the Annales des Sc. Nat., Nov. 1834.

tial consideration, which Adanson's scheme had failed to take account of. The uncle died in 1777; and his nephew, in speaking of him, compares his arrangement to the *Ordines Naturales* of Linnæus: "Both these authors," he says, "have satisfied themselves with giving a catalogue of genera which approach each other in different points, without explaining the motives which induced them to place one order before another, or to arrange a genus under a certain order. These two arrangements may be conceived as problems which their authors have left for botanists to solve. Linnæus published his; that of M. de Jussieu is only known by the manuscript catalogues of the garden of the Trianon."

It was not till the younger Jussieu had employed himself for nineteen years upon botany, that he published, in 1789, his *Genera Plantarum;* and by this time he had so entirely formed his scheme in his head, that he began the impression without having written the book, and the manuscript was never more than two pages in advance of the printer's type.

When this work appeared, it was not received with any enthusiasm; indeed, at that time, the revolutions of states absorbed the thoughts of all Europe, and left men little leisure to attend to the revolutions of science. The author himself was drawn into the vortex of public affairs, and for some years forgot his book. The method made its way slowly and with difficulty: it was a long time before it was comprehended and adopted in France, although the

botanists of that country had, a little while before, been so eager in pursuit of a natural system. In England and Germany, which had readily received the Linnæan method, its progress was still more tardy.

There is only one point, on which it appears necessary further to dwell. A main and fundamental distinction in all natural systems, is that of the Monocotyledonous and Dicotyledonous plants; that is, plants which unfold themselves from an embryo with two little leaves, or with one leaf only. This distinction produces its effects in the systems which are regulated by numbers; for the flowers and fruit of the monocotyledons are generally referrible to some law in which the number *three* prevails; a type which rarely occurs in dicotyledons, these affecting most commonly an arrangement founded on the number *five*. But it appears, when we attempt to rise towards a natural method, that this division according to the cotyledons is of a higher order than the other divisions according to number; and corresponds to a distinction in the general structure and organization of the plant. The apprehension of the due rank of this distinction has gradually grown clearer. Cuvier[9] conceives that he finds such a division clearly marked in Lobel, in 1581, and employed by Ray as the basis of his classification a century later. This difference has had its due place assigned it in more recent systems of arrangement; but it is only later still that its full import has been distinctly brought into view.

[9] Hist. Sc. Nat. ii. 197.

Desfontaines discovered[10] that the ligneous fibre is developed in an opposite manner in vegetables with one and with two cotyledons;—towards the inside in the former case, and towards the outside in the latter;—and hence these two great classes have been since termed *endogenous* and *exogenous*.

Thus this division, according to the cotyledons, appears to have the stamp of reality put upon it, by acquiring a physiological meaning. Yet we are not allowed to forget, even at this elevated point of generalisation, that *no one* character can be imperative in a natural method. Lamarck, who employed his great talents on botany, before he devoted himself exclusively to other branches of natural history, published his views concerning methods, systems[11], and characters. His main principle is, that no single part of a plant, however essential, can be a rule for classification; and hence he blames the Jussieuian method, as giving this inadmissible authority to the cotyledons. Roscoe[12] further urges, that some plants, as *Orchis morio*, and *Limodorum verecundum*, have no visible cotyledons. Yet De Candolle, who laboured along with Lamarck in the new edition of the *Flore Française*, has, as we have already intimated, been led, by the most careful application of the wisest principles, to a system of natural orders,

[10] Ib. i. p. 196, 290.

[11] Sprengel ii. 296; and, there quoted, Flore Française, t. i. 3, 1778. Mém. Ac. P. 1785. Journ. Hist. Nat. t. i. For Lamarck's Méthode Analytique, see Dumeril, Sc. Nat. i. Art. 390.

[12] Roscoe, Linn. Tr. vol. xi. *Cuscuta* also has no cotyledons.

of which Jussieu's may be looked upon as the basis; and we shall find the greatest botanists, up to the most recent period, recognising, and employing themselves in improving, Jussieu's natural families; so that in the progress of this part of our knowledge, vague and perplexing as it is, we have no exception to our general aphorism, that no real acquisition in science is ever discarded.

The reception of the system of Jussieu in this country was not so ready and cordial as of that of Linnæus. As we have already noticed, the two systems were looked upon as rivals. Thus Roscoe, in 1810[13], endeavoured to show that Jussieu's system was not more natural than the Linnæan, and was inferior as an artificial system: but he argues his points as if Jussieu's characters were the grounds of his distribution; which, as we have said, is to mistake the construction of a natural system. In 1803, Salisbury[14] had already assailed the machinery of the system, maintaining that there are no cases of perigynous stamens, as Jussieu proposes; but this he urges with great expressions of respect for the author of the method. And the more profound botanists of England soon showed that they could appreciate and extend the natural method. Robert Brown, who had accompanied Captain Flinders to New Holland in 1801, and who, after examining that country, brought home, in 1805, nearly four thousand species of plants, was the most distinguished example

[13] Linn. Tr. vol. xi. p. 50.

[14] Linn. Tr. vol. viii.

of this. In his preface to the *Prodromus Floræ Novæ Hollandiæ*, he says, that he found himself under the necessity of employing the natural method, as the only way of avoiding serious error, when he had to deal with so many new genera as occur in New Holland; and that he has, therefore, followed the method of Jussieu; the greater part of whose orders are truly natural, "although their arrangement in classes, as is," he says, "conceded by their author, no less candid than learned, is often artificial, and, as appears to me, rests on doubtful grounds."

From what has already been said, the reader will, I trust, see what an extensive and exact knowledge of the vegetable world, and what comprehensive views of affinity, must be requisite in a person who has to modify the natural system so as to make it suited to receive and arrange a great number of new plants, extremely different from the genera on which the arrangement was first formed, as the New Holland genera for the most part were. He will see also how impossible it must be to convey by extract or description any notion of the nature of these modifications: it is enough to say, that they have excited the applause of botanists wherever the science is studied, and that they have induced Humboldt and his fellow-labourers, themselves botanists of the first rank, to dedicate one of their works to him in terms of the strongest admiration[15]. Mr. Brown has also published special disquisitions on

[15] Roberto Brown, Britanniarum gloriæ atque ornamento, totam Botanices scientiam ingenio mirifico complectenti, &c.

parts of the Natural System; as on Jussieu's *Proteaceæ*[16]: on the *Asclepiadeæ*, a natural family of plants which must be separated from Jussieu's *Apocyneæ*[17]: and other similar labours.

We have, I think, been led, by our survey of the history of Botany, to this point;—that a Natural Method directs us to the study of Physiology, as the only means by which we can reach the object. This conviction, which in botany comes at the end of a long series of attempts at classification, offers itself at once in the natural history of animals, where the physiological signification of the resemblances and differences is so much more obvious. I shall not, therefore, consider any of these branches of natural history in detail as examples of mere classification. They will come before us, if at all, more properly when we consider the classifications which depend on the functions of organs, and on the corresponding modifications which they necessarily undergo; that is, when we trace the results of physiology. But before we proceed to sketch the history of that part of our knowledge, there are a few points in the progress of zoology, understood as a mere classificatory science, which appear to me sufficiently instructive to make it worth our while to dwell upon them.

[16] Linn. Tr. vol. x. 1809.

[17] Mem. of Wernerian N. H. Soc. vol. i. 1809.

CHAPTER VI.

The Progress of Systematic Zoology.

The history of Systematic Botany, as we have presented it, may be considered as a sufficient type of the general order of progression in the sciences of classification. It has appeared, in the survey which we have had to give, that this science, no less than those which we first considered, has been formed by a series of inductive processes, and has, in its history, Epochs at which, by such processes, decided advances were made. The important step in such cases is, the seizing upon some artificial mark which conforms to natural resemblances;—some basis of arrangement and nomenclature by means of which true propositions of considerable generality can be enunciated. The advance of other classificatory sciences, as well as botany, must consist of such steps; and their course, like that of botany, must (if we attend only to the real additions made to knowledge,) be gradual and progressive, from the earliest times to the present.

To exemplify this continued and constant progression in the whole range of zoology, would require vast knowledge and great labour; and is, perhaps, the less necessary, after we have dwelt so long on the history of botany, considered in the same point of view. But there are a few observations

respecting zoology in general which we are led to make in consequence of statements recently promulgated; for these statements seem to represent the history of zoology as having followed a course very different from that which we have just ascribed to the classificatory sciences in general. It is held by some naturalists, that not only the formation of a systematic classification in zoology dates as far back as Aristotle; but that his classification is, in many respects, superior to some of the most admired and recent attempts of modern times.

If this were really the case, it would show that at least the idea of a systematic classification had been formed and developed long previous to the period to which we have assigned such a step; and it would be difficult to reconcile such an early maturity of zoology with the conviction which we have had impressed upon us by the other parts of our history, that not only labour but time, not only one man of genius but several, and those succeeding each other, are requisite to the formation of any considerable science.

But, in reality, the statements to which we refer, respecting the scientific character of Aristotle's zoological system, are altogether without foundation; and this science confirms the lessons taught us by all the others. The misstatements respecting Aristotle's doctrines are on this account so important, and are so curious in themselves, that I must dwell upon them a little.

Aristotle's nine Books "On Animals" are a work

enumerating the differences of animals in almost all conceivable respects;—the organs of sense, of motion, of nutrition, the interior anatomy, the exterior covering, the manner of life, growth, generation, and many other circumstances. These differences are very philosophically estimated. "The corresponding parts of animals," he says[1], "besides the differences of quality and circumstance, differ in being more or fewer, greater or smaller, and, speaking generally, in excess and defect. Thus some animals have crustaceous coverings, others hard shells; some have long beaks, some short; some have many wings, some have few. Some again have parts which others want, as crests and spurs." He then makes the following important remark: "Some animals have parts which correspond to those of others, not as being the same in species, nor by excess and defect, but by *analogy*; thus a claw is analogous to a thorn, and a nail to a hoof, and a hand to the nipper of a lobster, and a feather to a scale; for what a feather is in a bird, that is a scale in a fish."

It will not, however, be necessary, in order to understand Aristotle for our present purpose, that we should discuss his notion of analogy. He proceeds to state his object[2], which is, as we have said, to describe the differences of animals in their structure and habits. He then observes, that for structure, we may take man for our type[3], as being best known to us; and the remainder of the first book

[1] Lib. i. c. i. [2] c. ii. [3] c. iii.

is occupied with a description of man's body, beginning from the head, and proceeding to the extremities.

In the next Book, (from which are taken the principal passages in which his modern commentators detect his system,) he proceeds to compare the differences of parts in different animals, according to the order which he had observed in man. In the first chapter he speaks of the head and neck of animals; in the second, of the parts analogous to arms and hands; in the third, of the breast and paps, and so on; and thus he comes, in the seventh chapter, to the legs, feet, and toes; and in the eleventh, to the teeth, and so to other parts.

The construction of a classification consists in the selection of certain parts, as those which shall eminently and peculiarly determine the place of each species in our arrangement. It is clear, therefore, that such an enumeration of differences as we have described, supposing it complete, contains the materials of all possible classifications. But we can with no more propriety say that the author of such an enumeration of differences is the author of any classification which can be made by means of them, than we can say that a man who writes down the whole alphabet writes down the solution of a given riddle or the answer to a particular question.

Yet it is on no other ground than this enumeration, so far as I can discover, that Aristotle's "System" has been so decidedly spoken of[4], and exhibited in the

[4] Linnæan Transactions, vol. xvi. p. 24.

most formal tabular shape. The authors of this "*Systema Aristotelicum*," have selected, I presume, the following passages from the work On Animals, as they might have selected any other; and by arranging them according to a subordination unknown to Aristotle himself, have made for him a scheme which undoubtedly bears a great resemblance to the most complete systems of modern times.

Book I, chap. v.—"Some animals are viviparous, some oviparous, some vermiparous. The viviparous are such as man, and the horse, and all those animals which have hair; and of aquatic animals, the whale kind, as the dolphin and cartilaginous fishes."

Book II, chap. vii.—"Of quadrupeds which have blood and are viviparous, some are (as to their extremities,) many-cloven, as the hands and feet of man. For some are many-toed, as the lion, the dog, the panther; some are bifid, and have hoofs instead of nails, as the sheep, the goat, the elephant, the hippopotamus; and some have undivided feet, as the solid-hoofed animals, the horse and ass. The swine kind share both characters."

Chap. ii.—"Animals have also great differences in the teeth, both when compared with each other and with man. For all quadrupeds which have blood and are viviparous, have teeth. And in the first place, some are ambidental[5], (having teeth in both jaws;) and some are not so, wanting the front teeth in the upper jaw. Some have neither front teeth nor horns, as the camel; some have tusks[6], as

[5] Ἀμφόδοντα. [6] Χαυλιόδοντα.

the boar, some have not. Some have serrated[7] teeth, as the lion, the panther, the dog; some have the teeth unvaried[8], as the horse and the ox; for the animals which vary their cutting-teeth have all serrated teeth. No animal has both tusks and horns; nor has any animal with serrated teeth either of those weapons. The greater part have the front teeth cutting, and those within broad."

These passages undoubtedly contain most of the differences on which the asserted Aristotelian classification rests; but the classification is formed by using the characters drawn from the teeth, in order to subdivide those taken from the feet; whereas in Aristotle these two sets of characters stand side by side, along with dozens of others; any selection of which, employed according to any arbitrary method of subordination, might with equal justice be called Aristotle's system.

Why, for instance, in order to form subdivisions of animals, should we not go on with Aristotle's continuation of the second of the above-quoted passages, instead of capriciously leaping to the third: "Of these some have horns, some have none . . . Some have a fetlock-joint[9], some have none . . . Of those which have horns, some have them solid throughout, as the stag; others, for the most part, hollow . . . Some cast their horns, some do not." If it be replied, that we could not, by means of such characters, form a tenable zoological system; we

[7] Καρχαρόδοντα. [8] Ἀνεπάλλακτα. [9] Ἀστράγαλον.

again ask by what right we assume Aristotle to have made or attempted a systematic arrangement, when what he has written, taken in its natural order, does not admit of being construed into a system.

Again, what is the object of any classification? This, at least, among others. To enable the person who uses it to study and describe more conveniently the objects thus classified. If, therefore, Aristotle had formed or adopted any system of arrangement, we should see it in the order of the subjects in his work. Accordingly, so far as he has a system, he professes to make this use of it. At the beginning of the fifth Book, where he is proceeding to treat of the different modes of generation of animals, he says, "As we formerly made a division of animals according to their kinds, we must now, in the same manner, give a general survey of their history (*θεωρίαν*). Except, indeed, that in the former case we made our commencement by a description of man, but in the present instance we must speak of him last, because he requires most study. We must begin then with those animals which have shells: we must go on to those which have softer coverings, as crustacea, soft animals, and insects; after these, fishes, both viviparous and oviparous; then birds; then land animals, both viviparous and oviparous."

It is clear from this passage that Aristotle had certain wide and indefinite views of classification, which though not very exact, are still highly credit-

able to him; but it is equally clear that he was quite unconscious of the classification that has been ascribed to him. If he had adopted that or any other system, this was precisely the place in which he must have referred to and employed it.

The honour due to the stupendous accumulation of zoological knowledge which Aristotle's works contain, cannot be tarnished by our denying him the credit of a system which he never dreamt of, and which, from the nature of the progress of science, could not possibly be constructed at that period. But, in reality, we may exchange the mistaken claims which we have been contesting for a better, because a truer praise. Aristotle does show, as far as could be done at his time, a perception of the need of groups, and of names of groups, in the study of the animal kingdom; and thus may justly be held up as the great figure in the Prelude to the Formation of Systems which took place in more advanced scientific times.

This appears, in some measure, from the passage last quoted. For not only is there, in that, a clear recognition of the value and object of a method in natural history; but the general arrangement of the animal kingdom there proposed has considerable scientific merit, and is, for the time, very philosophical. But there are passages in his work in which he shows a wish to carry the principle of arrangement more into detail. Thus, in the first Book, before proceeding to his survey of the differences of

animals[10], after speaking of such classes as quadrupeds, birds, fishes, cetaceous, testaceous, crustaceous animals, mollusks, insects, he says, (chap. vii.)

"Animals cannot be divided into large genera, in which one kind includes many kinds. For some kinds are unique, and have no difference of species, as men. Some have such kinds, but have no names for them. Thus all quadrupeds which have not wings, have blood. But of these, some are viviparous, some oviparous. Those which are viviparous have not all hair; those which are oviparous have scales." We have here a manifestly intentional subordination of characters: and a kind of regret that we have not names for the classes here indicated; such, for instance, as viviparous quadrupeds having hair. But he follows the subject into further detail. "Of the class of viviparous quadrupeds," he continues, "there are many genera[11], but these again are without names, except specific names, such as man, lion, stag, horse, dog, and the like. Yet there is a genus of animals that have manes, as the horse, the ass, the *oreus*, the *ginnus*, the *innus*, and the animal which in Syria is called *heminus* (mule); for these are called mules from their resemblance only; not being mules, for they breed of their own kind. Wherefore," he adds, that is, because we do not possess recognised genera and generic names of this kind, "we must take the species separately, and study the nature of each."

[10] Γένη. [11] Εἴδη.

These passages afford us sufficient ground for placing Aristotle at the head of those naturalists to whom the first views of the necessity of a zoological system are due. It was, however, very long before any worthy successor appeared, for no additional step was made till modern times. When natural history again came to be studied in nature, the business of classification, as we have seen, forced itself upon men's attention, and was pursued with interest in animals, as in plants. The steps of its advance were similar in the two cases;—by successive naturalists various systems of artificial marks were selected with a view to precision and convenience;—and these artificial systems assumed the existence of certain natural groups, and of a natural system to which they gradually tended. But there was this difference between botany and zoology:—the reference to physiological principles, which, as we have remarked, influenced the natural systems of vegetables in a latent and obscure manner, botanists being guided by its light, but hardly aware that they were so, affected the study of systematic zoology more directly and evidently. For men can neither overlook the general physiological features of animals, nor avoid being swayed by them in their judgments of the affinities of different species. Thus the classifications of zoology tended more and more to a union with comparative anatomy, as the science was more and more improved[12]. But comparative anatomy belongs to

[12] Cuvier, Leç. d'Anat. Comp. vol. i. p. 17.

the subject of the next Book; and anything it may be proper to say respecting its influence upon zoological arrangements, will properly find a place there.

It will appear, and indeed it hardly requires to be proved, that those steps in systematic zoology which are due to the light thrown upon the subject by physiology, are the result of a long series of labours by various naturalists, and have been, like other advances in science, led to and produced by the general progress of such knowledge. We can hardly expect that the classificatory sciences can undergo any material improvement which is not of this kind. Very recently, however, some authors have attempted to introduce into these sciences certain principles which do not, at first sight, appear as a continuation and extension of the previous researches of comparative anatomists. I speak, in particular, of the doctrines of a *circular progression* in the series of affinity; of a *quinary division* of such circular groups; and of a relation of *analogy* between the members of such groups, entirely distinct from the relation of *affinity*.

The doctrine of circular progression has been propounded principally by Mr. Macleay; although, as he has shown[18], there are suggestions of the same kind to be found in other writers. So far as this negatives the doctrine of a mere linear progression in nature, which would place each genus in con-

[18] Linn. Trans. vol. xvi. p. 9.

tact only with the preceding and succeeding ones, and so far as it requires us to attend to more varied and ramified resemblances, there can be no doubt that it is supported by the result of all the attempts to form natural systems. But whether that assemblage of circles of arrangement which is now offered to naturalists, be the true and only way of exhibiting the natural relations of organized bodies, is a much more difficult question, and one which I shall not here attempt to examine; although it will be found, I think, that those analogies of science which we have had to study, would not fail to throw some light upon such an inquiry. The prevalence of an invariable numerical law in the divisions of natural groups, (as the number five is asserted to prevail by Mr. Macleay, the number ten by Fries, and other numbers by other writers,) would be a curious fact, if established; but it is easy to see that nothing short of the most consummate knowledge of natural history, joined with extreme clearness of view and calmness of judgment, could enable any one to pronounce on the attempts which have been made to establish such a principle. But the doctrine of a relation of analogy distinct from affinity, in the manner which has recently been taught, seems to be obviously at variance with that gradual approximation of the classificatory to the physiological sciences, which has appeared to us to be the general tendency of real knowledge. It seems difficult to understand how a reference to such relations as

those which are offered as examples of analogy[14], can be otherwise than a retrograde step in science.

Without, however, now dwelling upon these points, I will treat a little more in detail of one of the branches of Zoology.

[14] For example, the goatsucker has an *affinity* with the swallow; but it has an *analogy* with the bat, because both fly at the same hour of the day, and feed in the same manner. Swainson, *Geography and Classification of Animals*, p. 129.

CHAPTER VII.

The Progress of Ichthyology.

If it had been already observed and admitted that sciences of the same kind follow, and must follow, the same course in the order of their developement, it would be unnecessary to give a history of any special branch of systematic zoology; since botany has already afforded us a sufficient example of the progress of the classificatory sciences. But we may be excused for introducing a sketch of the advance of one department of zoology, since we are led to the attempt by the peculiar advantage we possess in having a complete history of the subject written with great care, and brought up to the present time, by a naturalist of unequalled talents and knowledge. I speak of Cuvier's "Historical View of Ichthyology," which forms the first chapter of his great work on that part of natural history. The place and office in the progress of this science, which is assigned to each person by Cuvier, will probably not be lightly contested. It will, therefore, be no small confirmation of the justice of the views on which the distribution of the events in the history of botany was founded, if Cuvier's representation of the history of ichthyology offers to us obviously a distribution almost identical.

We shall find that this is so;—that we have, in

zoology as in botany, a period of unsystematic knowledge; a period of misapplied erudition; an epoch of the discovery of fixed characters; a period in which many systems were put forwards; a struggle of an artificial and a natural method; and a gradual tendency of the natural method to a manifestly physiological character. A few references to Cuvier's history will enable us to illustrate these and other analogies.

Period of Unsystematic Knowledge.—It would be easy to collect a number of the fabulous stories of early times, which formed a portion of the *imaginary knowledge* of men concerning animals as well as plants. But passing over these, we come to a long period and a great collection of writers, who, in various ways, and with various degrees of merit, contributed to augment the knowledge which existed concerning fish, while as yet there was hardly ever any attempt at a classification of that province of the animal kingdom. Among these writers, Aristotle is by far the most important. Indeed he carried on his zoological researches under advantages which rarely fall to the lot of the naturalist; if it be true, as Athenæus and Pliny state[1] Alexander gave him sums which amounted to nine hundred talents to enable him to collect materials for his history of animals, and put at his disposal several thousands of men to be employed in hunting, fishing, and procuring information for him. The works of his on

[1] Cuv. Hist. Nat. des Poissons, i. 13,

Natural History which remain to us are, nine Books "Of the History of Animals," four "On the Parts of Animals," five "On the Generation of Animals," one "On the Going of Animals," one "Of the Sensations, and the Organs of them," one "On Sleeping and Waking," one "On the Motion of Animals," one "On the Length and Shortness of Life," one "On Youth and Old Age," one "On Life and Death," one "On Respiration." The knowledge of the external and internal conformation of animals, their habits, instincts, and uses, which Aristotle displays in these works, is spoken of as something wonderful even to the naturalists of our own time. And he may be taken as a sufficient representative of the whole of the period of which we speak; for he is, says Cuvier[2], not only the first, but the only one of the ancients who has treated of the natural history of fishes (the province to which we now confine ourselves,) in a scientific point of view, and in a way which shows genius.

We may pass over, therefore, the other ancient authors from whose writings Cuvier, with great learning and sagacity, has levied contributions to the history of ichthyology; as Theophrastus, Ovid, Pliny, Oppian, Athenæus, Ælian, Ausonius, Galen. We may, too, leave unnoticed the compilers of the middle ages, who did little but abstract and disfigure the portions of natural history which they found in the ancients. Ichthyological, like other knowledge, was

[2] Cuv. p. 18.

scarcely sought except in books, and on that very account was not understood when it was found.

Period of Erudition.—Better times at length came, and men began to observe nature for themselves. The three great authors who are held to be the founders of modern ichthyology, appeared in the middle of the sixteenth century; these were Bélon, Rondelet, and Salviani, who all published about 1555. All the three, very different from the compilers who filled the interval from Aristotle to them, themselves saw and examined the fishes which they describe, and[3] have given faithful representations of them. But resembling in that respect the founders of modern botany, Brasavola, Ruellius, Tragus, and others, they resembled them in this also, that they attempted to make their own observations a commentary upon the ancient writers. Faithful to the spirit of their time, they are far more careful to make out the names which each fish bore in the ancient world, and to bring together scraps of their history from the authors in whom those names occur, than to describe them in a lucid manner; so that without their figures, says Cuvier, it would be almost as difficult to discover their species as those of the ancients.

The difficulty of describing and naming species so that they can be recognised, is little appreciated at first, although it is in reality the main-spring of the progress of the sciences of classification. Aristotle[3] never dreamt that the nomenclature which was in

[3] Cuvier, p. 17.

use in his time could ever become obscure; hence he has taken no precaution to enable his readers to recognise the species of which he speaks; and in him and in other ancient authors, it requires much labour and great felicity of divination to determine what the names mean. The perception of this difficulty among modern naturalists led to systems, and to nomenclature founded upon system; but these did not come into being immediately at the time of which we speak; nor till the evil had grown to a more inconvenient magnitude.

Period of Accumulation of Materials. Exotic Collections.—The fishes of Europe were for some time the principal objects of study; but those of distant regions soon came into notice[4]. In the seventeenth century the Dutch conquered Brazil, and George Margrave, employed by them, described the natural productions of the country, and especially the fishes. Bontius, in like manner, described some of those of Batavia. Thus these writers correspond to Rumphius and Rheede in the history of botany. Many others might be mentioned; but we must hasten to the formation of systems, which is our main object of attention.

Epoch of the Fixation of Characters. Ray and Willoughby.—In botany, as we have seen, though Ray was one of the first who invented a connected system, he was preceded at a considerable interval by Cæsalpinus, who had given a genuine solution of the same problem. It is not difficult to

[4] Cuv. p. 43.

assign reasons why a sound classification should be discovered for plants at an earlier period than for fishes. The vastly greater number of the known species, and the facilities which belong to the study of vegetables, give the botanist a great advantage; and there are numerical relations of a most definite kind, (for instance, the number of parts of the seed-vessel employed Cæsalpinus as one of the bases of his system,) which are tolerably obvious in plants, but which are not easily discovered in animals. And thus we find that in ichthyology, Ray, with his pupil and friend Willoughby, appears as the first founder of a tenable system[5].

The first great division in this system is into cartilaginous and bony fishes; a primary division, which had been recognised by Aristotle, and is retained by Cuvier in his latest labours. The subdivisions are determined by the general form of the fish, (as long or flat,) by the teeth, the presence or absence of ventral fins, the number of dorsal fins, and the nature of the spines of the fins, as soft or prickly. Most of these characters have preserved their importance in later systems; especially the last, which, under the terms *malacopterygian* and *acanthopterygian*, holds a place in the best recent arrangements.

That this system was a true first approximation

[5] Francisci Willoughbeii, Armigeri, de Historia Piscium, libri iv. jussu et sumptibus Societatis Regiæ Londinensis editi, &c. Totum opus recognovit, coaptavit, supplevit, librum etiam primum et secundum adjecit Joh. Raius. Oxford, 1686.

to a solution of the problem, appears to be allowed by naturalists. Although, says Cuvier[6], there are in it no genera well defined and well limited, still in many places the species are brought together very naturally, and in such a way that a few words of explanation would suffice to form, from the groups thus presented to us, several of the genera which have since been received. Even in botany, as we have seen, genera were hardly maintained with any degree of precision, till the binary nomenclature of Linnæus made this division a matter of such immense convenience.

The amount of this convenience, the value of a brief and sure nomenclature, had not yet been duly estimated. The work of Willoughby forms an epoch[7], and a happy epoch, in the history of ichthyology; for the science, once systematized, could distinguish the new from the old, arrange methodically, describe clearly. Yet, because Willoughby had no nomenclature of his own, and no fixed name for his genera, his immediate influence was not great. I will not attempt to trace this influence in succeeding authors, but proceed to the next important step in the progress of system.

Improvement of the System. Artedi.—Peter Artedi was a countryman and intimate friend of Linnæus: and rendered to ichthyology nearly the same services which Linnæus rendered to botany. In his *Philosophia Ichthyologica,* he analyzed[8] all the interior and exterior parts of animals; he created a

[6] Cuvier, p. 57. [7] p. 58. [8] p. 20.

precise terminology for the different forms of which these parts are susceptible; he laid down rules for the nomenclature of genera and species; besides his improvements of the subdivision of the class. It is impossible not to be struck with the close resemblance between these steps, and those which are due to the *Fundamenta Botanica*. The latter work appeared in 1736, the former was published by Linnæus, after the death of the author, in 1738; but Linnæus had already, as early as 1735, made use of Artedi's manuscripts in the ichthyological part of his *Systema Naturæ*. We cannot doubt that the two young naturalists, (they were nearly of the same age,) must have had a great influence upon each others views and labours; and it would be difficult now to ascertain what portion of the peculiar merits of the Linnæan reform was derived from Artedi. But we may remark that, in ichthyology at least, Artedi appears to have been a naturalist of more original views and profounder philosophy than his friend and editor, who afterwards himself took up the subject. The reforms of Linnæus, in all parts of natural history, appear as if they were mainly dictated by a love of elegance, symmetry, clearness, and definiteness; but the improvement of the ichthyological system by Artedi seems to have been a step in the progress to a natural arrangement. His genera[9], which are forty-five in number, are so well constituted, that they have almost all been preserved; and the sub-

[9] Cuvier, p. 71.

divisions which the constantly-increasing number of species has compelled his successors to introduce, have very rarely been such that they have led to the transposition of his genera.

In its bases, however, Artedi's was an artificial system. His characters were positive and decisive, founded in general upon the number of rays of the membrane of the gills, of which he was the first to mark the importance;—upon the relative position of the fins, upon their number, upon the part of the mouth where the teeth are found, upon the conformation of the scales. Yet, in some cases, he has recourse to the interior anatomy.

Linnæus himself at first did not venture to deviate from the footsteps of a friend, who, in this science, had been his master. But in 1758, in the tenth edition of the *Systema Naturæ*, he chose to depend upon himself, and devised a new ichthyological method. He divided some genera, united others, gave to the species trivial names and characteristic phrases, and added many species to those of Artedi. Yet his innovations are for the most part disapproved of by Cuvier; as his transferring the *chondropterygian* fishes of Artedi to the class of reptiles, under the title of *Amphibia nantes;* and his rejecting the distinction of acanthopterygian and malacopterygian, which, as we have seen, had prevailed from the time of Willoughby, and introducing in its stead a distribution founded on the presence or absence of the ventral fins, and on their situation with regard to the pectoral fins. "Nothing," says Cuvier, "more

breaks the true connexions of genera than these orders of *apodes*, *jugulares*, *thoracici*, and *abdominales*."

Thus Linnæus, though acknowledging the value and importance of natural orders, was not happy in his attempt to construct a system which should lead to them. In his detection of good characters for an artificial system he was more fortunate. He was always attentive to number, as a character; and he had the very great merit[10] of noticing the number of rays of the fins of each species. This mark is one of great importance and use. And this, as well as other branches of natural history, derived incalculable advantages from the more general merits of the illustrious Swede[11];—the precision of the characters, the convenience of a well settled terminology, the facility afforded by the binary nomenclature. These recommendations gave him a pre-eminence which was acknowledged by almost all the naturalists of his time, and displayed by the almost universal adoption of his nomenclature, in zoology, as well as in botany; and by the almost exclusive employment of his distributions of classes, however imperfect and artificial they might be.

And even[12] if Linnæus had had no other merit than the impulse he gave to the pursuit of natural science, this alone would suffice to immortalize his name. In rendering natural history easy, or at least in making it appear so, he diffused a general taste for it. The great took it up with interest; the young, full of ardour, rushed forwards in all direc-

[10] Cuvier, p. 74. [11] p. 85. [12] p. 88.

tions, with the sole intention of completing his system. The civilized world was eager to build the edifice which Linnæus had planned.

This spirit, among other results, produced voyages of natural historical research, sent forth by nations and sovereigns. George the Third of England had the honour of setting the example in this noble career, by sending out the expeditions of Byron, Wallis, and Carteret, in 1765. These were followed by those of Bougainville, Cook, Forster, and others. Russia also scattered several scientific expeditions through her vast dominions; and pupils of Linnæus sought the icy shores of Greenland and Iceland, in order to apply his nomenclature to the productions of those climes. But we need not attempt to convey any idea of the vast stores of natural historical treasures which were thus collected from every part of the globe.

I shall not endeavour to follow Cuvier in giving an account of the great works of natural history to which this accumulation of materials gave rise; such as the magnificent work of Bloch on Fishes, which appeared in 1782—1785: nor need I attempt, by his assistance, to characterize or place in their due position the several systems of classification proposed about this time. But in the course of these various essays, the distinction of the artificial and natural methods of classification came more clearly into view than before; and this is a point so important to the philosophy of the subject, that we must devote a few words to it.

Separation of the Artificial and Natural Methods in Ichthyology.—It has already been said that all so-called artificial methods of classification must be natural, at least as to the narrowest members of the system: thus the artificial Linnæan method is natural as to species, and even as to genera. And on the other hand, all proposed natural methods, so long as they remain unmodified, are artificial as to their characteristic marks. Thus a Natural Method is an attempt to provide positive and distinct *characters* for the *wider* as well as for the narrower *natural groups*. These considerations are applicable to zoology as well as to botany. But the question, how we know natural groups before we find marks for them, was, in botany, as we have seen, susceptible only of vague and obscure answers:—the mind forms them, it was said, by taking the aggregate of all the characters; or by establishing a subordination of characters. And each of these answers had its difficulty, of which the solution appeared to be, that in attempting to form natural orders we are really guided by a latent undeveloped estimate of physiological relations. Now this principle, which was so dimly seen in the study of vegetables, shines out with much greater clearness when we come to the study of animals, in which the physiological relations of the parts are so manifest that they cannot be overlooked, and have so strong an attraction for our curiosity that we cannot help having our judgments influenced by them. Hence the superiority of natural systems in zoology would probably be far more generally allowed than in

botany; and no arrangement of animals which, in a large number of instances, violated strong and clear natural affinities, would be tolerated because it answered the purpose of enabling us easily to find the name and place of the animal in the artificial system. Every system of zoological arrangement may be supposed to aspire to be a natural system. But according to the various habits of the minds of systematizers, this object was pursued more or less steadily and successfully; and these differences came more and more into view with the increase of knowledge and the multiplication of attempts.

Bloch, whose ichthyological labours have been mentioned, followed in his great work the method of Linnæus. But towards the end of his life he had prepared a general system, founded upon one single numerical principle;—the number of fins; just as the sexual system of Linnæus is founded upon the number of stamina: and he made his subdivisions according to the position of the ventral and pectoral fins; the same character which Linnæus had employed for his primary division. He could not have done better, says Cuvier[13], if his object had been to turn into ridicule all artificial methods, and to show to what absurd combinations they may lead.

Cuvier himself, who always pursued natural systems with a singularly wise and sagacious consistency, attempted to improve the ichthyological arrangements which had been proposed before him. In his *Règne Animal*, published in 1817, he attempts the problem

[13] p. 108.

of arranging this class; and the views suggested to him, both by his successes, and his failures, are so instructive and philosophical, that I cannot illustrate the subject better than by citing some of them.

"The class of fishes," he says[24], "is, of all, that which offers the greatest difficulties, when we wish to subdivide it into orders, according to fixed and obvious characters. After many trials, I have determined on the following distribution, which in some instances is wanting in precision, but which possesses the advantage of keeping the natural families entire.

"Fish form two distinct series;—that of fish properly so called, and that of chondropterygians or cartilaginous fish.

"The *first* of these series has for its character, that the palatine bones replace, in it, the bones of the upper jaw: moreover the whole of its structure has evident analogies, which we shall explain.

"It divides itself into three ORDERS:

"The CYCLOSTOMES, in which the jaws are soldered (*soudées*) into an immoveable ring, and the bronchiæ are open in numerous holes.

"The SELACIANS which have the bronchiæ like the preceding, but not the jaws.

"The STURONIANS, in which the bronchiæ are open as usual by a slit furnished with an operculum.

"The second series, or that of *ordinary fishes*, offers me, in the first place, a primary division, into those of which the maxillary bone and the palatine arch

[24] Règne Animal, vol. ii. p. 110.

are dovetailed (*engrenés*) to the skull. Of these I make an order of PECTOGNATHS, divided into two families; the *gymnodonts* and the *scleroderms*.

"After these I have the fishes with complete jaws, but with bronchiæ which, instead of having the form of combs, as in all the others, have the form of a series of little tufts (*houppes*). Of these I again form an order, which I call LOPHOBRANCHS, which only includes one family.

"There then remains an innumerable quantity of fishes, to which we can no longer apply any characters except those of the exterior organs of motion. After long examination, I have found that the least bad of these characters is, after all, that employed by Ray and Artedi, taken from the nature of the first rays of the dorsal and of the anal fin. Thus ordinary fishes are divided into MALACOPTERYGIANS, of which all the rays are soft, except sometimes the first of the dorsal fin or the pectorals;—and ACANTHOPTERYGIANS, which have always the first portion of the dorsal, or of the first dorsal when there are two, supported by spinous rays, and in which the anal has also some such rays, and the ventrals, at least, each one.

"The former may be subdivided without inconvenience, according to their ventral fins, which are sometimes situate behind the abdomen, sometimes adherent to the apparatus of the shoulder, or, finally, are sometimes wanting altogether.

"We thus arrive at the three orders of ABDOMINAL MALACOPTERYGIANS, of SUBBRACHIANS, and of APO-

DES; each of which includes some natural families which we shall explain: the first, especially, is very numerous.

"But this basis of division is absolutely impracticable with the acanthopterygians; and the problem of establishing among these any other subdivision than that of the natural families has hitherto remained for me insoluble. Fortunately several of these families offer characters almost as precise as those which we could give to true orders.

"In truth, we cannot assign to the families of fishes, ranks as marked, as for example, to those of mammifers. Thus the chondropterygians on the one hand hold to reptiles by the organs of the senses, and by those of generation in some; and they are related to mollusks and worms by the imperfection of the skeleton in others.

"As to ordinary fishes, if any part of the organization is found more developed in some than in others, there does not result from this any pre-eminence sufficiently marked, or of sufficient influence upon their whole system, to oblige us to consult it in the methodical arrangement.

"We shall place them, therefore, nearly in the order in which we have just explained their characters."

I have extracted the whole of this passage, because, though it is too technical to be understood in detail by the general reader, those who have followed with any interest the history of the attempts at a natural

classification in any department in nature, will see here a fine example of the problems which such attempts propose, of the difficulties which it may present, and of the reasonings, labours, cautions, and varied resources, by means of which its solution is sought, when a great philosophical naturalist girds himself to the task. We see here, most instructively, how different the endeavour to frame such a natural system, is from the procedure of an artificial system, which carries imperatively through the whole of a class of organized beings, a system of marks either arbitrary, or conformable to natural affinities in a partial degree. And we have not often the advantage of having the reasons for a systematic arrangement so clearly and fully indicated, as is done here, and in the descriptions of the separate orders.

This arrangement Cuvier adhered to in all its main points, both in the second edition of the *Règne Animal*, published in 1821, and in his *Histoire Naturelle des Poissons*, of which the first volume was published in 1828, but which unfortunately was not completed at the time of his death. It may be supposed, therefore, to be in accordance with those views of zoological philosophy, which it was the business of his life to form and to apply; and in a work like the present, where, upon so large a question of natural history, we must be directed in a great measure by the analogy of the history of science, and by the judgments which seem most to have the character of wisdom, we appear to be justified in taking Cuvier's ichthyological system as the nearest approach which

has yet been made to a natural method in that department.

The true natural method is only one: artificial methods, and even good ones, there may be many, as we have seen in botany; and each of these may have its advantages for some particular use. On some methods of this kind, on which naturalists themselves have hardly yet had time to form a stable and distinct opinion, it is not our office to decide. But judging, as I have already said, from the general analogy of the natural sciences, I find it difficult to conceive that the ichthyological method of M. Agassiz, recently propounded with an especial reference to fossil fishes, can be otherwise than an artificial method. It is founded entirely on one part of the animal, its scaly covering, and even on a single scale. It does not conform to that which almost all systematic ichthyologists hitherto have considered as a permanent natural distinction of a high order;—the distinction of bony and cartilaginous fishes; for it is stated that each order contains examples of both[15]. I do not know what general anatomical or physiological truths it brings into view; but they ought to be very important and striking ones, to entitle them to supersede those which led Cuvier to his system. To this I may add, that the new ichthyological classification does not seem to form, as we should expect that any great advance towards a natural system would form, a connected sequel to the past history of

[15] Dr. Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, p. 270.

ichthyology;—a step to which anterior discoveries and improvements have led, and in which they are retained.

But notwithstanding these considerations, the method of M. Agassiz has probably very great advantages for his purpose; for in the case of fossil fish, the parts which are the basis of his system often remain, when even the skeleton is gone. And we may here again refer to a principle of the classificatory sciences, which we cannot make too prominent; —all arrangements and nomenclatures are good, which enable us to assert general propositions. Tried by this test, we cannot fail to set a high value on the arrangement of M. Agassiz; for propositions of the most striking generality respecting fossil remains of fish, of which geologists before had never dreamt, are enunciated by means of his groups and names. Thus only the two first orders, the *Placoïdians* and *Ganoïdians*, existed before the commencement of the cretaceous formation: the third and fourth orders, the *Ctenoïdians* and *Cycloïdians*, which contain three fourths of the eight thousand known species of living Fishes, appear for the first time in the cretaceous formation: and other geological relations of these orders, no less remarkable, have been ascertained by M. Agassiz.

But we have now, I trust, pursued these sciences of classification sufficiently far; and it is time for us to enter upon that higher domain, of Physiology, to which, as we have said, Zoology so irresistibly directs us.

BOOK XVII.

ORGANICAL SCIENCES.

HISTORY OF PHYSIOLOGY

AND

COMPARATIVE ANATOMY.

Fearful and wondrous is the skill which moulds
Our body's vital plan,
And from the first dim hidden germ unfolds
The perfect limbs of man.
Who, who can pierce the secret? tell us how
Something is drawn from nought,
Life from the inert mass? Who, Lord! but thou,
Whose hand the whole has wrought?
Of this corporeal substance, still to be,
Thine eye a survey took;
And all my members, yet unformed by thee,
Were written in thy book.

PSALM CXXXIX. 13—16.

INTRODUCTION

Of the Organical Sciences.

THOUGH the general notion of *life* is acknowledged by the most profound philosophers to be dim and mysterious, even up to the present time; and must, in the early stages of human speculation, have been still more obscure and confused; it was sufficient, even then, to give interest and connexion to men's observations upon their own bodies and those of other animals. It was seen, that in living things, certain peculiar processes were constantly repeated, as those of breathing and of taking food, for example; and that a certain conformation of the parts of the animal was subservient to these processes; and thus were gradually formed the notions of *Function* and of *Organization*. And the sciences of which these notions formed the basis are clearly distinguishable from all those which we have hitherto considered. We conceive an organized body to be one in which the parts are there for the sake of the whole, in a manner different from any mechanical or chemical connexion; we conceive a function to be not merely a process of change, but of change connected with the general vital process. When mechanical or chemical processes occur in the living body, they are instrumental to, and directed by, the peculiar powers of life. The sciences which thus

consider organization and vital functions may be termed *organical* sciences.

When men began to speculate concerning such subjects, the general mode of apprehending the process in the cases of some functions, appeared to be almost obvious; thus it was conceived that the growth of animals arose from their frame appropriating to itself a part of the substance of the food through the various passages of the body. Under the influence of such general conceptions, speculative men were naturally led to endeavour to obtain more clear and definite views of the course of each of such processes, and of the mode in which the separate parts contributed to it. Along with the observation of the living person, the more searching examination which could be carried on in the dead body, and the comparison of various kinds of animals, soon showed that this pursuit was rich in knowledge and in interest. Moreover, besides the interest which the mere speculative faculty gave to this study, the art of healing added to it a great practical value; and the effects of diseases and of medicines supplied new materials and new motives for the reasonings of the philosopher.

In this manner anatomy or physiology may be considered as a science which began to be cultivated in the earliest periods of civilisation. Like most other ancient sciences, its career has been one of perpetual though variable progress; and as in others, so in this, each step has implied those which had been previously made, and cannot be understood aright

except we understand them. Moreover, the steps of this advance have been very many and diverse; the cultivators of anatomy have in all ages been numerous and laborious; the subject is one of vast extent and complexity; almost every generation has added something to the current knowledge of its details; and the general speculations of physiologists have been subtle, bold, and learned. It must, therefore, be difficult or impossible for a person who has not studied the science with professional diligence and advantages, to form just judgments of the value of the discoveries of various ages and persons, and to arrange them in their due relation to each other. To this we may add, that though all the discoveries which have been made with respect to particular functions or organizations are understood to be subordinate to one general science, the Philosophy of Life, yet the principles and doctrines of this science nowhere exist in a shape generally received and assented to among physiologists; and thus we have not, in this science, the advantage which in some others we have possessed;—of discerning the true direction of its first movements, by knowing the point to which they ultimately tend;—of running on beyond the earlier discoveries, and thus looking them in the face, and reading their true features. With these disadvantages, all that we can have to say respecting the history of physiology must need great indulgence on the part of the reader.

Yet here, as in other cases, we may, by guiding our views by those of the greatest and most philo-

sophical men who have made the subject their study, hope to avoid material errors. Nor can we well evade making the attempt. To obtain some simple and consistent view of the progress of physiological science, is in the highest degree important to the completion of our views of the progress of physical science. For the physiological or organical sciences form a class to which the classes already treated of, the mechanical, chemical, and classificatory sciences, are subordinate and auxiliary. Again, another circumstance which makes physiology an important part of our survey of human knowledge, is, that we have here a science which is concerned, indeed, about material combinations, but in which we are led almost beyond the borders of the material world into the region of sensation and perception, thought and will. Such a contemplation may offer some suggestions which may prepare us for the transition from physical to metaphysical speculations.

In the survey which we must, for such purposes, take of the progress of physiology, it is by no means necessary that we should exhaust the subject, and attempt to give the history of every branch of the knowledge of the phenomena and laws of living creatures. It will be sufficient, if we follow a few of the lines of such researches, which may be considered as examples of the whole. We see that life is accompanied and sustained by many processes, which at first offer themselves to our notice as separate functions, however they may afterwards be found to be connected and identified; such are feed-

ing, digestion, respiration, the action of the heart and pulse, generation, perception, voluntary motion. The analysis of any one of these functions may be pursued separately. And since in this, as in all genuine sciences, our knowledge becomes real and scientific, only in so far as it is verified in particular facts, and thus established in general propositions, such an original separation of the subjects of research is requisite to a true representation of the growth of real knowledge. The loose hypotheses and systems concerning the connexion of different vital faculties and the general nature of living things, which have often been promulgated, must be excluded from this part of our plan. We do not deny all value and merit to such speculations; but they cannot be admitted in the earlier stages of the history of physiology, treated of as an inductive science. If the doctrines so propounded have a solid and permanent truth, they will again come before us when we have travelled through the range of more limited truths, and are prepared to ascend with security and certainty into the higher region of general physiological principles. If they cannot be arrived at by such a road, they are then, however plausible and pleasing, no portion of that real and progressive science with which alone our history is concerned.

We proceed, therefore, to trace the establishment of some of the more limited but certain doctrines of physiology.

CHAPTER I.

Discovery of the Organs of Voluntary Motion.

Sect. 1.—*Knowledge of Galen and his Predecessors.*

In the earliest conceptions which men entertained of their power of moving their own members, they probably had no thought of any mechanism or organization by which this was effected. The foot and the hand, no less than the head, were seen to be endowed with life; and this pervading life seemed sufficiently to explain the power of motion in each part of the frame, without its being held necessary to seek out a special seat of the will, or instruments by which its impulses were made effective. But the slightest inspection of dissected animals showed that their limbs were formed of a curious and complex collection of cordage, and communications of various kinds, running along and connecting the bones of the skeleton. These cords and communications we now distinguish as muscles, nerves, veins, arteries, &c.; and among these, we assign to the muscles the office of moving the parts to which they are attached, as cords move the parts of a machine. Though this action of the muscles on the bones may now appear very obvious, it was, pro-

bably, not at first discerned. It is observed that Homer, who describes the wounds which are inflicted in his battles with so much apparent anatomical precision, nowhere employs the word *muscle*. And even Hippocrates of Cos, the most celebrated physician of antiquity, is held to have had no distinct conception of such an organ[1]. He always employs the word *flesh* when he means *muscle*, and the first explanation of the latter word (μῦς) occurs in a spurious work ascribed to him. For nerves, sinews, ligaments[2], he uses indiscriminately the same terms; (τόνος or νεῦρον;) and of these nerves (νεῦρα) he asserts that they contract the limbs. Nor do we find much more distinctness on this subject even in Aristotle, a generation or two later. "The origin of the νεῦρα," he says[3], "is from the heart; they connect the bones, and surround the joints." It is clear that he means here the muscles, and therefore it is with injustice that he has been accused of the gross error of deriving the nerves from the heart. And he is held to have really had the merit[4] of discovering the nerves of sensation, which he calls the "canals of the brain" (πόροι τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου); but the analysis of the mechanism of motion is left by him almost untouched. Perhaps his want of sound mechanical notions, and his constant straining after verbal generalities, and systematic classifications of the widest kind, supply the true account of his thus

[1] Sprengel, Geschichte der Arzneikunde, i. 382.
[2] Ib. i. 385.
[3] Hist. Anim. iii. 5.
[4] Sprengel, Gesch. Arz. i. 456.

missing the solution of one of the simplest problems of anatomy.

In this, however, as in other subjects, his immediate predecessors were far from remedying the deficiencies of his doctrines. Those who professed to study physiology and medicine were, for the most part, studious only to frame some general system of abstract principles, which might give an appearance of connexion and profundity to their tenets. In this manner the successors of Hippocrates became a medical school, of great note in its day, designated as the *dogmatic* school[5]; in opposition to which arose an *empiric* sect, who professed to deduce their modes of cure, not from theoretical dogmas, but from experience. These rival parties prevailed principally in Asia Minor and Egypt, during the time of Alexander's successors,—a period rich in names, but poor in discoveries; and we find no clear evidence of any decided advance in anatomy, such as we are here attempting to trace.

The victories of Lucullus and Pompeius, in Greece and Asia, made the Romans acquainted with the Greek philosophy; and the consequence soon was, that shoals of philosophers, rhetoricians, poets, and physicians[6] streamed from Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt, to Rome and Italy, to traffic their knowledge and their arts for Roman wealth. Among these, was one person whose name makes a great figure in the history of medicine, Asclepiades of Prusa in

[5] Sprengel, Gesch. Arz. i. 583. [6] Ib. ii. 5.

Bithynia. This man appears to have been a quack, with the usual endowments of his class;—boldness, singularity, a contemptuous rejection of all previously esteemed opinions, a new classification of diseases, a new list of medicines, and the assertion of some wonderful cures. He would not, on such accounts, deserve a place in the history of science, but that he became the founder of a new school, the *Methodic*, which professed to hold itself separate both from the Dogmatics and the Empirics.

I have noticed these schools of medicine, because, though I am not able to state distinctly their respective merits in the cultivation of anatomy, a great progress in that science was undoubtedly made during their domination, of which the praise must, I conceive, be in some way divided among them. The amount of this progress we are able to estimate, when we come to the works of Galen, who flourished under the Antonines, and died about A.D. 203. The following passage from his works will show that this progress in knowledge was not made without the usual condition of laborious and careful experiment, while it implies the curious fact of such experiment being conducted by means of family tradition and instruction, so as to give rise to a *caste* of dissectors. In the opening of his Second Book, "On Anatomical Manipulations," he speaks thus of his predecessors: "I do not blame the ancients, who did not write books on anatomical manipulation; though I praise Marinus, who did. For it was superfluous for them to compose such records for themselves or others,

while they were, from their childhood, exercised by their parents in dissecting, just as familiarly as in writing and reading; so that there was no more fear of their forgetting their anatomy, than of their forgetting their alphabet. But when grown men, as well as children, were taught, this thorough discipline fell off; and, the art being carried out of the family of the Asclepiads, and declining by repeated transmission, books became necessary for the student."

That the general structure of the animal frame, as composed of bones and muscles, was known with great accuracy before the time of Galen, is manifest from the nature of the mistakes and deficiences of his predecessors which he finds it necessary to notice. Thus he observes, that some anatomists have made one muscle into two, from its having two heads;—that they have overlooked some of the muscles in the face of an ape, in consequence of not skinning the animal with their own hands;—and the like. Such remarks imply that the current knowledge of this kind was tolerably complete. Galen's own views of the general mechanical structure of an animal are very clear and sound. The skeleton, he observes, discharges[7] the office of the pole of a tent, or the walls of a house. With respect to the action of the muscles, his views were anatomically and mechanically correct; in some instances, he showed what this action was, by severing the muscle[8]. He himself added considerably to the existing knowledge of this subject; and his discoveries and de-

[7] De Anatom. Administ. i. 2. [8] Sprengel, ii. 157.

scriptions, even of very minute parts of the muscular system, are spoken of with praise by modern anatomists[9].

We may consider, therefore, that the doctrine of the muscular system, as a collection of cords and sheets, by the contraction of which the parts of the body are moved and supported, was firmly established, and completely followed into detail, by Galen and his predecessors. But there is another class of organs connected with voluntary motion, the nerves, and we must for a moment trace the opinions which prevailed respecting these. Aristotle, as we have said, noticed some of the nerves of sensation. But Herophilus, who lived in Egypt in the time of the first Ptolemy, distinguished nerves as the organs of the will[10], and Rufus, who lived in the time of Trajan[11], divides the nerves into sensitive and motive, and derives them all from the brain. But this did not imply that men had yet distinguished the nerves from the muscles. Even Galen maintained that every muscle consists of a bundle of nerves and sinews[12]. But the important points, the necessity of the nerve, and the origination of all this apparatus of motion from the brain, he insists upon with great clearness and force. Thus he proved the necessity experimentally, by cutting through some of the bundles of nerves[13], and thus preventing the corresponding motions. And it is, he says[14], allowed

[9] Sprengel, ii. 150. [10] Ib. i. 534. [11] Ib. ii. 67.
[12] Ib. ii. 152. Galen, De Motu Musc. p. 553.
[13] Ib. ii. 157. [14] De Hippocr. et Plat. Dog. viii. 1.

by all, both physicians and philosophers, that where the origin of the nerve is, there the seat of the soul (ἡγημονικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς) must be: now this, he adds, is in the brain, and not in the heart.

Thus the general construction and arrangement of the organization by which voluntary motion is effected, was well made out at the time of Galen, and is found distinctly delivered in his works. We cannot, perhaps, justly ascribe any large portion of the general discovery to him: indeed, the conception of the mechanism of the skeleton and muscles was probably so gradually unfolded in the minds of anatomical students, that it would be difficult, even if we knew the labours of each person, to select one, as peculiarly the author of the discovery. But it is clear that all those who did materially contribute to the establishment of this doctrine, must have possessed the qualifications which we find in Galen for such a task; namely, clear mechanical views of what the tensions of collections of strings could do, and an exact practical acquaintance with the muscular cordage which exists in the animal frame;—in short, in this as in other instances of real advance in science, there must have been clear ideas and real facts, unity of thought and extent of observation, brought into contact.

Sect. 2.—Recognition of Final Causes in Physiology. Galen.

THERE is one idea which the researches of the physiologist and the anatomist so constantly force upon him, that he cannot help assuming it as one of the guides of his speculations; I mean, the idea of a *purpose*, or, as it is called in Aristotelian phrase, a *final cause*, in the arrangements of the animal frame. It is impossible to doubt that the motive nerves run along the limbs, *in order* that they may convey to the muscles the impulses of the will; and that the muscles are attached to the bones, *in order* that they may move and support them. This conviction prevails so steadily among anatomists, that even when the use of any part is altogether unknown, it is still taken for granted that it has some use. The developement of this conviction,—of a purpose in the parts of animals,—of a function to which each portion of the organization is subservient,—contributed greatly to the progress of physiology; for it constantly urged men forwards in their researches respecting each organ, till some definite view of its purpose was obtained. The assumption of hypothetical final causes in physics may have been, as Bacon asserts it to have been, prejudicial to science; but the assumption of unknown final causes in physiology, has given rise to the science. The two branches of speculation, Physics and Physiology, were equally led, by every new phenomenon, to ask

their question, "Why?" But, in the former case, "why" meant "through what cause?" in the latter, "for what end?" And though it may be possible to introduce into physiology the doctrine of efficient causes, such a step can never obliterate the obligations which the science owes to the pervading conception of a purpose contained in all organization.

This conception makes its appearance very early. Indeed, without any special study of our structure, the thought, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, forces itself upon men, with a mysterious impressiveness, as a suggestion of our Maker. In this bearing, the thought is developed to a considerable extent in the well-known passage in Xenophon's Conversations of Socrates. Nor did it ever lose its hold on sober-minded and instructed men. The Epicureans, indeed, held that the eye was not made for seeing, nor the ear for hearing; and Asclepiades, whom we have already mentioned as an impudent pretender, adopted this wild dogma[15]. Such assertions required no labour. "It is easy," says Galen[16], "for people like Asclepiades, when they come to any difficulty, to say that nature has worked to no purpose." The great anatomist himself pursues his subject in a very different temper. In a well-known passage, he breaks out into an enthusiastic scorn of the folly of the atheistical notions[17]. "Try," he says, "if you can imagine a shoe made with half the skill which appears in the skin of the foot." Some one had spoken of a struc-

[15] Spr. ii. 15. [16] De Usu Part. v. 5, (on the kidneys.)
[17] De Usu Part. iii. 10.

ture of the human body which he would have preferred to that which it now has. "See," Galen exclaims, after pointing out the absurdity of the imaginary scheme, "see what brutishness there is in this wish. But if I were to spend more words on such cattle, reasonable men might blame me for desecrating my work, which I regard as a religious hymn in honour of the Creator."

Galen was from the first highly esteemed as an anatomist. He was originally of Pergamus; and after receiving the instructions of many medical and philosophical professors, and especially of those of Alexandria, which was then the metropolis of the learned and scientific world, he came to Rome, where his reputation was soon so great as to excite the envy and hatred of the Roman physicians. The emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus would have retained him near them; but he preferred pursuing his travels, directed principally by curiosity. When he died, he left behind him numerous works, all of them of great value for the light they throw on the history of anatomy and medicine; and these were for a long period the storehouse of all the most important anatomical knowledge which the world possessed. In the time of intellectual barrenness and servility, among the Arabs and the Europeans of the dark ages, the writings of Galen had almost unquestioned authority[18]; and it was only by an uncommon effort of independent thinking that Abdollatif ventured to assert, that even Galen's assertions must give way

[18] Sprengel, ii. 359.

to the evidence of the senses. In more modern times, when Vesalius, in the sixteenth century, accused Galen of mistakes, he drew upon himself the hostility of the whole body of physicians. Yet the mistakes were such as might have been pointed out and confessed[19] without acrimony, if, in times of revolution, mildness and moderation were possible; but an impatience of the superstition of tradition on the part of the innovators, and an alarm of the subversion of all recognised truths on the part of the established teachers, inflame and pervert all such discussions. Vesalius's main charge against Galen is, that his dissections were performed upon animals, and not upon the human body. Galen himself speaks of the dissection of apes as a very familiar employment, and states that he killed them by drowning. The natural difficulties which, in various ages, have prevented the unlimited prosecution of human dissection, operated strongly among the ancients, and it would have been difficult, under such circumstances, to proceed more judiciously than Galen did.

I shall now proceed to the history of the discovery of another and less obvious function, the circulation of the blood, which belongs to modern times.

[19] Cuv. Leçons sur l'Hist. des Sc. Nat. p. 25.

CHAPTER II.

Discovery of the Circulation of the Blood.

Sect. 1.—*Prelude to the Discovery.*

The blood-vessels, the veins and arteries, are as evident and peculiar in their appearance as the muscles; but their function is by no means so obvious. Hippocrates[1] did not discriminate veins and arteries; both are called by the same name (φλέβες); and the word from which artery comes (ἀρτηρίη) means, in his works, the windpipe. Aristotle, scanty as was his knowledge of the vessels of the body, has yet the merit of having traced the origin of all the veins to the heart. He expressly contradicts those of his predecessors who had derived the veins from the head[2]; and refers to dissection for the proof. If the book "On the Breath" be genuine (which is doubted), Aristotle was aware of the distinction between veins and arteries. "Every artery," it is there asserted, "is accompanied by a vein; the former are filled only with breath or air[3]." But whether or no this passage be Aristotle's, he held opinions equally erroneous; as, that the windpipe conveys air into the heart[4]. Galen[5] was far from having views

[1] Spr. i. 383. [2] Hist. Animal. iii. 3.
[3] De Spiritu. v. 1078. [4] Spr. i. 501. [5] Ib. ii. 152.

respecting the blood-vessels, as sound as those which he entertained concerning the muscles. He held the liver to be the origin of the veins, and the heart of the arteries. He was, however, acquainted with their junctions, or *anastomoses*. But we find no material advance in the knowledge of this subject, till we overleap the blank of the middle ages, and reach the dawn of modern science.

The father of modern anatomy is held to be Mondino[6], who dissected and taught at Bologna in 1315. Some writers have traced in him the rudiments of the doctrine of the circulation of the blood; for he says, that the heart transmits blood to the lungs. But it is allowed, that he afterwards destroys the merit of his remark, by repeating the old assertion that the left ventricle ought to contain spirit or air, which it generates from the blood.

Anatomy was cultivated with great diligence and talent in Italy by Achillini, Carpa, and Messa, and in France by Sylvius and Stephanus (Dubois and Etienne). Yet still these empty assumptions respecting the heart and blood-vessels kept their ground. Vesalius, a native of Brussels, has been termed the founder of human anatomy, and his great work *De Humani Corporis Fabricâ* is, even yet, a splendid monument of art, as well as science. It is said that his figures were designed by Titian; and if this be not exactly true, says Cuvier[7], they must, at least, be from the pencil of one of the most distinguished

[6] Encyc. Brit. 692, Anatomy.

[7] Leçons sur l'Hist. des Sc. Nat. p. 21.

pupils of the great painter; for to this day, though we have more finished drawings, we have no designs that are more artistlike. Fallopius, who succeeded Vesalius at Padua, made some additions to the researches of his predecessor; but in his treatise *De Principio Venarum*, it is clearly seen[8] that the circulation of the blood was unknown to him. Eustachius also, whom Cuvier groups with Vesalius and Fallopius, as the three great founders of modern anatomy, wrote a treatise on the vein *azygos*[9], which is a little treatise on comparative anatomy: but the discovery of the functions of the veins came from a different quarter.

The unfortunate Servetus, who was burnt at Geneva as a heretic in 1553, is the first person who speaks distinctly of the small circulation, or that which carries the blood from the heart to the lungs, and back again to the heart. His work entitled *Christianismi Restitutio* was also burnt; and only two copies are known to have escaped the flames. It is in this work that he asserts the doctrine in question, as a collateral argument or illustration of his subject. "The communication between the right and left ventricle of the heart, is made," he says, "not as is commonly believed, through the partition of the heart, but by a remarkable artifice (*magno artificio*), the blood is carried from the right ventricle by a long circuit through the lungs; is elaborated by the lungs, made yellow, and transfused from the

[8] Cuv. Sc. Nat. p. 32.

[9] Ib. p. 34.

vena arteriosa into the *arteria venosa*." This truth is, however, mixed with various of the traditional fancies concerning the "*vital spirit*, which has its origin in the left ventricle." It may be doubted, also, how far Servetus formed his opinion upon conjecture, and on a hypothetical view of the formation of this vital spirit. And we may, perhaps, more justly ascribe the real establishment of the pulmonary circulation as an inductive truth, to Realdus Columbus, a pupil and successor of Vesalius at Padua, who published a work *De Re Anatomicâ* in 1559, in which he claims this discovery as his own[10].

Andrew Cæsalpinus, who has already come under our notice as one of the fathers of modern inductive science, both by his metaphysical and his physical speculations, described the pulmonary circulation still more completely in his *Quæstiones Peripateticæ*, and even seemed to be on the eve of discovering the great circulation; for he remarked the swelling of veins below ligatures, and inferred from it a refluent motion of blood in these vessels[11]. But another discovery of structure was needed, to prepare the way for this discovery of function; and this was made by Fabricius of Acquapendente, who succeded in the grand list of great professors at Padua, and taught there for fifty years[12]. Sylvius had discovered the existence of the valves of the veins; but Fabricius remarked that they are all turned towards the heart. Combining this disposition with that of the valves of

[10] Encyc. Brit. [11] Ib. [12] Cuv. p. 44.

the heart, and with the absence of valves in the arteries, he might have come to the conclusion[13] that the blood moves in a different direction in the arteries and in the veins, and might thus have discovered the circulation: but this glory was reserved for William Harvey: so true is it, observes Cuvier, that we are often on the brink of a discovery without suspecting that we are so;—so true is it, we may add, that a certain succession of time and of persons is generally necessary to familiarize men with one thought, before they can advance to that which is the next in order.

Sect. 2.—The Discovery of the Circulation made by Harvey.

William Harvey was born in 1578 at Folkestone in Kent[14]. He first studied at Cambridge: he afterwards went to Padua, where the celebrity of Fabricius of Acquapendente attracted from all parts those who wished to be instructed in anatomy and physiology. In this city, excited by the discovery of the valves of the veins, which his master had recently made, and reflecting on the direction of the valves which are at the entrance of the veins into the heart, and at the exit of the arteries from it, he conceived the idea of making experiments, in order to determine what is the course of the blood in its vessels. He found that when he tied up veins in various

[13] Cuv. p. 45. [14] p. 51.

animals, they swelled below the ligature, or in the part furthest from the heart; while arteries, with a like ligature, swelled on the side next the heart. Combining these facts with the direction of the valves, he came to the conclusion that the blood is impelled by the left side of the heart in the arteries to the extremities, and thence returns by the veins into the right side of the heart. He showed, too, how this was confirmed by the phenomena of the pulse, and by the results of opening the vessels. He proved, also, that the circulation of the lungs is a continuation of the larger circulation; and thus the whole doctrine of the double circulation was established.

Harvey's experiments had been made in 1616 and 1618; it is commonly said that he first promulgated his opinion in 1619; but the manuscript of the lectures, delivered by him as lecturer to the College of Physicians, is extant in the British Museum, and, containing the propositions on which the doctrine is founded, refers them to April 1616. It was not till 1628 that he published, at Frankfort, his *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis;* but he there observes that he had for above nine years confirmed and illustrated his opinion in his lectures, by arguments grounded upon ocular demonstration.

Sect. 3.—*Reception of the Discovery.*

Without dwelling long upon the circumstances of the general reception of this doctrine, we may

observe that it was, for the most part, readily accepted by his countrymen, but that abroad it had to encounter considerable opposition. Although, as we have seen, his predecessors had approached so near to the discovery, men's minds were by no means as yet prepared to receive it. Several physicians denied the truth of the opinion, among whom the most eminent was Riolan, professor at the Collège de France. Other writers, as usually happens in the case of great discoveries, asserted that the doctrine was ancient, and even that it was known to Hippocrates. Harvey defended his opinion with spirit and temper; yet he appears to have retained a lively recollection of the disagreeable nature of the struggles in which he was thus involved. At a later period of his life, Ent[15], one of his admirers, who visited him, and urged him to publish the researches on generation, on which he had long been engaged, gives this account of the manner in which he received the proposal: "And would you then advise me, (smilingly replies the doctor,) to quit the tranquillity of this haven, wherein I now calmly spend my days, and again commit myself to the unfaithful ocean? You are not ignorant how great troubles my lucubrations, formerly published, have raised. Better it is, certainly, at some time, to endeavour to grow wise at home in private, than by the hasty divulgation of such things to the knowledge whereof you have attained with vast labour,

[15] Epist. Dedic. to Anatom. Exercit.

to stir up tempests that may deprive you of your leisure and quiet for the future."

His merits were, however, soon generally recognised. He was[16] made physician to James the First, and afterwards to Charles the First, and attended that unfortunate monarch in the civil war. He had the permission of the parliament to accompany the king on his leaving London; but this did not protect him from having his house plundered in his absence, not only of its furniture, but, which he felt more, of the records of his experiments. In 1652, his brethren of the College of Physicians placed a marble bust of him in their hall, with an inscription recording his discoveries; and two years later, he was nominated to the office of president of the College, which however he declined in consequence of his age and infirmities. His doctrine soon acquired popular currency; it was, for instance, taken by Descartes[17] as the basis of his physiology in his work *On Man;* and Harvey had the pleasure, which is often denied to discoverers, of seeing his discovery generally adopted during his lifetime.

Sect. 4.—*Bearing of the Discovery on the Progress of Physiology.*

In considering the intellectual processes by which Harvey's discoveries were made, it is impossible not to notice, that the recognition of a creative purpose,

[16] Biog. Brit. [17] Cuv. 53.

which, as we have said, appears in all sound physiological reasonings, prevails eminently here. "I remember," says Boyle, "that when I asked our famous Harvey what were the things that induced him to think of a circulation of the blood, he answered me, that when he took notice that the valves in the veins of so many parts of the body were so placed, that they gave a free passage to the blood towards the heart, but opposed the passage of the venal blood the contrary way; he was incited to imagine that so provident a cause as Nature had not placed so many valves without design; and no design seemed more probable than that the blood should be sent through the arteries, and return through the veins, whose valves did not oppose its course that way."

We may notice further, that this discovery implied the usual conditions, distinct general notions, careful observation of many facts, and the mental act of bringing together these elements of truth. Harvey must have possessed clear views of the motions and pressures of a fluid circulating in ramifying tubes, to enable him to see how the position of valves, the pulsation of the heart, the effects of ligatures, of bleeding, and of other circumstances, ought to manifest themselves in order to confirm his view. That he referred to a multiplied and varied experience for the evidence that it was so confirmed, we have already said. Like all the best philosophers of his time, he insists rigidly upon the necessity of such

experience. "In every science," he says[18], "be it what it will, a diligent observation is requisite, and sense itself must be frequently consulted. We must not rely upon other men's experience, but our own, without which no man is a proper disciple of any part of natural knowledge." And by publishing his experiments, he trusts, he adds, that he has enabled his reader "to be an equitable umpire between Aristotle and Galen;" or rather, he might have said, to see how, in the promotion of science, sense and reason, observation and invention, have a mutual need of each other.

We may observe further, that though Harvey's glory, in the case now before us, rested upon his having proved the reality of certain mechanical movements and actions in the blood, this discovery, and all other physiological truths, necessarily involved the assumption of some peculiar agency belonging to living things, different both from mechanical agency, and from chemical; and in short, something *vital*, and not physical merely. For when it was seen that the pulsation of the heart, its *systole* and *diastole*, caused the circulation of the blood, it might still be asked, what force caused this constantly-recurring contraction and expansion. And again, circulation is closely connected with respiration; the blood is, by the circulation, carried to the lungs, and is there, according to the

[18] Generation of Animals, Pref.

expression of Columbus and Harvey, mixed with air. But by what mechanism does this mixture take place, and what is the real nature of it? And when succeeding researches had enabled physiologists to give an answer to this question, as far as chemical relations go, and to say that the change consists in the abstraction of the carbon from the blood by means of the oxygen of the atmosphere; they were still only led to ask further, how this chemical change was effected, and how such a change of the blood fitted it for its uses. Every function of which we explain the course, the mechanism, or the chemistry, is connected with other functions,—is subservient to them, and they to it; and all together are parts of the general vital system of the animal, ministering to its life, but deriving their activity from the life. Life is not a collection of forces, or polarities, or affinities, such as any of the physical or chemical sciences contemplate; it has powers of its own, which often supersede those subordinate relations; and in the cases where men have traced such agents in the animal frame, they have always seen, and usually acknowledged, that these agents were ministerial to higher agency, more difficult to trace than these, but more truly the cause of the phenomena.

The discovery of the mechanical and chemical conditions of the vital functions, as a step in physiology, may be compared to the discovery of the laws of phenomena in the heavens by Kepler and his predecessors, while the discovery of the force by which they were produced was still reserved in mys-

tery for Newton to bring to light. The subordinate relation of the facts, their dependence on space and time, their reduction to order and cycle, had been fully performed; but the reference of them to distinct ideas of causation, their interpretation as the results of mechanical force, was omitted or attempted in vain. The very notion of such force, and of the manner in which motions were determined by it, was in the highest degree vague and vacillating; and a century was requisite, as we have seen, to give to the notion that clearness and fixity which made the mechanics of the heavens a possible science. In like manner, the notion of life, and of vital forces, is still too obscure to be steadily held. We cannot connect it distinctly with severe inductions from facts. We can trace the motions of the animal fluids, as Kepler traced the motions of the planets; but when we seek to render a reason for these motions, like him we recur to terms of a wide and profound, but mysterious import; to virtues, influences, undefined powers. Yet we are not, on this account, to despair. The very instance to which I am referring shows us how rich is the promise of the future. Why, says Cuvier[19], may not natural history one day have its Newton? The idea of the vital forces may gradually become so clear and definite as to be available in science; and future generations may include, in their physiology, propositions elevated as far above the circulation of the blood, as the doctrine

[19] Ossem. Foss. Introd.

of universal gravitation goes beyond the explanation of the heavenly motions by epicycles.

If, by what has been said, I have exemplified sufficiently the nature of those steps in physiology, which, like the discovery of the circulation, give an explanation of the process of some of the animal functions, it is not necessary for me to dwell longer on the subject; for to write a history, or even a sketch of the history of physiology, would suit neither my powers nor my purpose. Some further analysis of the general views which have been promulgated by the most eminent physiologists, may perhaps be attempted in treating of the Philosophy of Inductive Science; but the estimation of the value of recent speculations and investigations must be left to those who have made this vast subject the study of their lives. A few brief notices may, however, be here introduced.

CHAPTER III.

Discovery of the Motion of the Chyle, and consequent Speculations.

Sect. 1.—*The Discovery of the Motion of the Chyle.*

It may have been observed in the previous course of this History of the Sciences, that the discoveries in each science have a peculiar physiognomy: something of a common type may be traced in the progress of each of the theories belonging to the same department of knowledge. We may notice something of this common form in the various branches of physiological speculation. In most, or all of them, we have, as we have noticed the case to be with respect to the circulation of the blood, clear and certain discoveries of mechanical and chemical processes, succeeded by speculations far more obscure, doubtful, and vague, repecting the relation of these changes to the laws of life. This feature in the history of physiology may be further instanced, (it shall be done very briefly,) in one or two other cases. And we may observe, that the lesson which we are to collect from this narrative, is by no means that we are to confine ourselves to the positive discovery, and reject all the less clear and certain speculations. To do this, would be to lose most of the chances of

ulterior progress; for though it may be, that our conceptions of the nature of organic life are not yet sufficiently precise and steady to become the guides to positive inductive truths, the only way in which these peculiar physiological ideas can be made more distinct and precise, and thus brought more nearly into a scientific form, is by this struggle with our ignorance or imperfect knowledge. This is the lesson we have learnt from the history of physical astronomy and other sciences. We must strive to refer facts which are known and understood, to higher principles, of which we cannot doubt the existence, and of which, in some degree, we can see the place; however dim and shadowy may be the glimpses we have hitherto been able to obtain of their forms. We may often fail in such attempts, but without the attempt we can never succeed.

That the food is received into the stomach, there undergoes a change of its consistence, and is then propelled along the intestines, are obvious facts in the animal economy. But a discovery made in the course of the seventeenth century brought into clearer light the sequel of this series of processes, and its connexion with other functions. In the year 1622, Asellius or Aselli[1] discovered certain minute vessels, termed *lacteals*, which absorb a white liquid (the *chyle*) from the bowels, and pour it into the blood. These vessels had, in fact, been discovered by Eristratus, in the ancient world[2], in the time of Ptolemy;

[1] Mayo, Physiology, p. 156. [2] Cuv. Hist. Sc. p. 50.

but Aselli was the first modern who attended to them. He described them in a treatise, entitled, *De Venis Lacteis, cum figuris elegantissimis*, printed at Milan in 1627, the year after the death of the author. This work is remarkable as the first which exhibits *coloured* anatomical figures; the arteries and the veins are represented in red, the lacteals in black.

Eustachius[3], at an earlier period, had described (in the horse) the thoracic duct by which the chyle is poured into the subclavian vein, on the right side of the neck. But this description did not excite so much notice as to prevent its being forgotten, and rediscovered in 1650, after the knowledge of the circulation of the blood had given more importance to such a discovery. Up to this time[4], it had been supposed that the lacteals carried the chyle to the liver, and that the blood was manufactured there. This opinion had prevailed in all the works of the ancients and moderns; its falsity was discovered by Pecquet, a French physician, and published in 1651, in his *New Anatomical Experiments;* in which are discovered a receptacle of the chyle, unknown till then, and the vessel which conveys it to the subclavian vein. Pecquet himself, and other anatomists, soon connected this discovery with the doctrine, then recently promulgated, of the circulation of the blood. In 1665, these vessels, and the *lymphatics* which are connected with them, were further illustrated by Ruysch in his exhibition of their valves (*Dilucidatio valvularum in vasis lymphaticis et lacteis*).

[3] Cuv. p. 34.

[4] Ib. p. 365.

Sect. 2.—*The Consequent Speculations. Hypotheses of Digestion.*

THUS it was shown that aliments taken into the stomach are, by its action, made to produce *chyme;* from the chyme, gradually changed in its progress through the intestines, chyle is absorbed by the lacteals; and this, poured into the blood by the thoracic duct, repairs the waste and nourishes the growth of the animal. But by what powers is the food made to undergo these transformations? Can we explain them on mechanical or on chemical principles? Here we come to a part of physiology less certain than the discovery of vessels, or of the motion of fluids. We have a number of opinions on the subject, but no universally acknowledged truth. We have a collection of *Hypotheses of Digestion* and *Nutrition.*

I shall confine myself to the former class; and without dwelling long upon these, I shall mention some of them. The philosophers of the Academy *del Cimento,* and several others, having experimented on the stomach of gallinaceous birds, and observed the astonishing force with which it breaks and grinds substances, were led to consider the digestion which takes place in the stomach as a kind of *trituration*[5]. Other writers thought it was more properly described as *fermentation;* others again spoke of it as a *putrefaction.* Varignon gave a merely physical account of the first part of the process, maintaining that the

[5] Bourdon, Physiol. Comp. p. 514.

division of the aliments was the effect of the disengagement of the *air* introdueed into the stomach, and dilated by the heat of the body. The opinion that digestion is a *solution* of the food by the gastric juice has been more extensively entertained.

Spallanzani and others made many experiments on this subject. Yet it is denied by the best physiologists, that the changes of digestion can be adequately represented as chemical changes only. The nerves of the stomach (the *pneumo-gastric*) are said to be essential to digestion. Dr. Wilson Philip has asserted that the influence of these nerves, when they are destroyed, may be replaced by a galvanic current. This might give rise to a supposition that digestion depends on galvanism. Yet we cannot doubt that all these hypotheses,—mechanical, physical, chemical, galvanic—are altogether insufficient. "The stomach must have," as Dr. Prout says[6], "the power of organizing and vitalizing the different elementary substances. It is impossible to imagine that this organizing agency of the stomach can be chemical. This agency is *vital*, and its nature completely unknown."

[6] Bridgewater Tr. p. 493.

CHAPTER IV.

Examination of the Process of Reproduction in Animals and Plants, and consequent Speculations.

Sect. 1.—*The Examination of the Process of Reproduction in Animals.*

It would not, perhaps, be necessary to give any more examples of what has hitherto been the general process of investigations on each branch of physiology; or to illustrate further the combination which such researches present, of certain with uncertain knowledge;—of solid discoveries of organs and processes, succeeded by indefinite and doubtful speculations concerning vital forces. But the reproduction of organized beings is not only a subject of so much interest as to require some notice, but also offers to us laws and principles which include both the vegetable and the animal kingdom; and which, therefore, are requisite to render intelligible the most general views to which we can attain, respecting the world of organization.

The facts and laws of reproduction were first studied in detail in animals. The subject appears to have attracted the attention of some of the philosophers of antiquity in an extraordinary degree; and indeed we may easily imagine that they hoped, by

following this path, if any, to solve the mystery of creation. Aristotle appears to have pursued it with peculiar complacency; and his great work *On Animals* contains[1] an extraordinary collection of curious observations relative to this subject. He had learnt the modes of reproduction of most of the animals with which he was acquainted; and his work is still, as a writer of our own times has said[2], "original after so many copies, and young after two thousand years." His observations referred principally to the external circumstances of generation: the anatomical examination was left to his successors. Without dwelling on the intermediate labours, we come to modern times, and find that this examination owes its greatest advance to those who had the greatest share in the discovery of the circulation of the blood;—Fabricius of Acquapendente, and Harvey. The former[3] published a valuable work on the egg and the chick. In this are given, for the first time, figures representing the developement of the chick, from its almost imperceptible beginning, to the moment when it breaks the shell. Harvey pursued the researches of his teacher. Charles[4] the First had supplied him with the means of making the experiments which his purpose required, by sacrificing a great number of the deer in Windsor Park in the state of gestation: but his principal researches were those respecting the egg, in which he followed out the views of Fabricius. In the troubles which suc-

[1] Bourdon, p. 161.
[2] Cuv. Hist. Sc. Nat. p. 46.
[3] Ib. p. 101.
[4] Ib. p. 53.

ceeded the death of the unfortunate Charles, the house of Harvey was pillaged; and he lost the whole of the labours he had bestowed on the generation of insects. His work, *Exercitationes de Generatione Animalium*, was published at London in 1651; it is more detailed and perfect than that of Fabricius; but the author was prevented by the unsettled condition of the country from getting figures engraved to accompany his descriptions.

Many succeeding anatomists pursued the examination of the series of changes in generation, and of the organs which are concerned in them, especially Malpighi, who employed the microscope in this investigation, and whose work on the Chick was published in 1673. It is impossible to give here any general view of the result of these laborious series of researches: but we may observe, that they led to an extremely minute and exact survey of all the parts of the fœtus, its envelopes and appendages, and, of course, to a designation of these by appropriate names. These names afterwards served to mark the attempts which were made to carry the analogy of animal generation into the vegetable kingdom.

There is one generalisation of Harvey which deserves notice. He was led by his researches to the conclusion, that all living things may be properly said to come from eggs[5]: "Omne vivum ex ovo." Thus not only do oviparous animals produce by means of eggs, but in those which are viviparous,

[5] Exerc. lxiii.

the process of generation begins with the development of a small vesicle, which comes from the ovary, and which exists before the embryo: and thus viviparous or suckling-beasts, notwithstanding their name, are born from eggs, as well as birds, fishes, and reptiles[6]. This principle also excludes that supposed production of organized beings without parents (of worms in corrupted matter, for instance,) which was formerly called *spontaneous generation;* and the best physiologists of modern times agree in denying the reality of such a mode of generation[7].

Sect. 2.—The Examination of the Process of Reproduction in Vegetables.

THE extension of the analogies of animal generation to the vegetable world was far from obvious. This extension was however made;—with reference to the embryo plant, principally by the microscopic observers, Nehemiah Grew, Marcello Malpighi, and Antony Leeuwenhoek;—with respect to the existence of the sexes, by Linnæus and his predecessors.

The microscopic labours of Grew and Malpighi were patronised by the Royal Society of London in its earliest youth. Grew's book, *The Anatomy of Plants*, was ordered to be printed in 1670. It contains plates representing extremely well the process of germination in various seeds, and the author's observations exhibit a very clear conception of the

[6] Bourdon, p. 122.

[7] Ib. p. 49.

relation and analogies of different portions of the seed. On the day on which the copy of this work was laid before the Society, a communication from Malpighi of Bologna, *Anatomes Plantarum Idea*, stated his researches, and promised figures which should illustrate them. Both authors afterwards went on with a long train of valuable observations which they published at various times, and which contain much that has since become a permanent portion of the science.

Both Grew and Malpighi were, as we have remarked, led to apply to vegetable generation many terms which imply an analogy with the generation of animals. Thus, Grew terms the innermost coat of the seed, the *secundine*; speaks of the *navel-fibres*, &c. Many more such terms have been added by other writers. And, as has been observed by a modern physiologist[8], the resemblance is striking. Both in the vegetable seed and in the fertilized animal egg, we have an *embryo*, *chalazæ*, a *placenta*, an *umbilical cord*, a *cicatricula*, an *amnios*, *membranes*, *nourishing vessels*. The cotyledons of the seed are the equivalent of the *vitellus* of birds, or of the *umbilical vesicle* of suckling-beasts: the *albumen* or *perisperm* of the grain is analogous to the *white of the egg* of birds, or the *allantoid* of viviparous animals.

Sexes of Plants.—The attribution of sexes to plants, is a notion which was very early adopted; but only gradually unfolded into distinctness and generality[9]. The ancients were acquainted with the

[8] Bourdon, p. 384.

[9] Mirbel, El. ii. 538.

fecundation of vegetables. Empedocles, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Pliny, and some of the poets, make mention of it: but their notions were very incomplete, and the conception was again lost in the general shipwreck of human knowledge. A Latin poem, composed in the fifteenth century by Jovianus Pontanus, the preceptor of Alphonso, King of Naples, is the first modern work in which mention is made of the sex of plants. Pontanus sings the loves of two date-palms, which grew at the distance of fifteen leagues from each other: the male at Brundusium, the female at Otranto. The distance did not prevent the female from becoming fruitful, as soon as the palms had raised their heads above the surrounding trees, so that nothing intervened directly between them, or, to speak with the poet, so that they were able to see each other.

Zaluzian, a botanist who lived at the end of the fifteenth century, says that the greater part of the species of plants are *androgynes*, that is, have the properties of the male and of the female united in the same plant; but that some species have the two sexes in separate individuals; and he adduces a passage of Pliny relative to the fecundation of the date-palm. John Bauhin, in the middle of the seventeenth century, cites the expressions of Zaluzian; and forty years later, a professor of Tübingen, Rudolph Jacob Camerarius, pointed out clearly the organs of generation, and proved by experiments on the mulberry, on maize, and on the plant called mercury (*mercurialis*), that when by any means the

action of the stamina upon the pistils is intercepted, the seeds are barren. Camerarius, therefore, a philosopher in other respects of little note, has the honour assigned him of being the author of the discovery of the sexes of plants in modern times[10].

The merit of this discovery will, perhaps, appear more considerable when it is recollected that it was rejected at first by very eminent botanists. Thus Tournefort, misled by insufficient experiments, maintained that the stamina are excretory organs; and Reaumur, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, inclined to the same doctrine. Upon this, Geoffroy, an apothecary at Paris, scrutinized afresh the sexual organs; he examined the various forms of the pollen, already observed by Grew and Malpighi; he pointed out the excretory canal, which descends through the style, and the *micropyle*, or minute orifice in the coats of the ovule, which is opposite to the extremity of this canal; though he committed some mistakes with regard to the nature of the pollen. Soon afterwards, Sebastian Vaillant, the pupil of Tournefort, but the corrector of his error on this subject, explained in his public lectures the phenomenon of the fecundation of plants, described the explosion of the anthers, and showed that the *florets* of composite flowers, though formed on the type of an *androgynous* flower, are sometimes male, sometimes female, and sometimes neuter.

But though the sexes of plants had thus been noticed, the subject drew far more attention when

[10] Mirbel, ii. 539.

Linnæus made the sexual parts the basis of his classification. Camerarius and Burkard had already entertained such a thought, but it was Linnæus who carried it into effect, and thus made the notion of the sexes of vegetables almost as familiar to us as that of the sexes of animals.

Sect. 3.—*The Consequent Speculations.—Hypotheses of Generation.*

THE views of the processes of generation, and of their analogies throughout the whole of the organic world, which were thus established and diffused, form an important and substantial part of our physiological knowledge. That a number of curious but doubtful hypotheses should be put forwards, for the purpose of giving further significance and connexion to these discoveries, was to be expected. We must content ourselves with speaking of these very briefly. We have such hypotheses in the earliest antiquity of Greece; for as we have already said, the speculations of cosmogony were the source of the Greek philosophy; and the laws of generation appeared to offer the best promise of knowledge respecting the mystery of creation. Hippocrates explained the production of a new animal by the *mixture of seed* of the parents; and the offspring was male or female as the seminal principle of the father or of the mother was the more powerful. According to Aristotle, the mother supplied the *matter*, and the father the *form*. Harvey's doctrine was, that the ovary of the female is fertilized by a

seminal contagion produced by the seed of the male. But an opinion which obtained far more general reception was, that the *embryo pre-existed* in the mother, before any union of the sexes[11]. It is easy to see that this doctrine is accompanied with great difficulties[12]; for if the mother, at the beginning of life, contain in her the embryos of all her future children; these embryos again must contain the children which they are capable of producing; and so on indefinitely; and thus each female of each species contains in herself the germs of infinite future generations. The perplexity which is involved in this notion of an endless series of creatures, thus encased one within the other, has naturally driven inquirers to attempt other suppositions. The microscopic researches of Leewenhoek and others led them to the belief that there are certain animalcules contained in the seed of the male, which are the main agents in the work of reproduction. This system ascribes almost everything to the male, as the one last mentioned does to the female. Finally, we have the system of Buffon;—the famous hypothesis of *organic molecules*. That philosopher asserted that he found, by the aid of the microscope, all nature full of moving globules, which he conceived to be, not animals as Leewenhoek imagined, but bodies capable of producing, by their combination, either animals or vegetables, in short, all organized bodies. These globules he called *organic molecules*[13]. And if we inquire how these organic molecules, proceeding

[11] Bourdon, p. 204. [12] Ib. p. 209. [13] Ib. p. 219.

from all parts of the two parents, unite into a whole, as perfect as either of the progenitors, Buffon answers, that this is the effect of an *interior mould*; that is, of a system of internal laws and tendencies which determine the form of the result as an external mould does.

An admirer of Buffon, who has well shown the untenable character of this system, has urged, as a kind of apology for the promulgation of the hypothesis[14], that at the period when its author wrote, he could not present his facts with any hope of being attended to, if he did not connect them by some common tie, some dominant idea which might gratify the mind; and that, acting under this necessity, he did well to substitute for the extant theories already superannuated and confessedly imperfect, conjectures more original and more probable. Without dissenting from this view, we may observe, that Buffon's theory, like those which preceded it, is excusable, and even deserving of admiration, so far as it groups the facts consistently; because in doing this, it exhibits the necessity, which the physiological speculator ought to feel, of aspiring to definite and solid general principles; and that thus, though the theory may not be established as true, it may be useful by bringing into view the real nature and application of such principles.

It is, therefore, according to our views, unphilosophical to derive despair, instead of hope, from the imperfect success of Buffon and his predecessors.

[14] Bourdon, p. 221.

Yet this is what is done by the writer to whom we refer. "For me," says he[15], "I avow that, after having long meditated on the system of Buffon,—a system so remarkable, so ingenious, so well matured, so wonderfully connected in all its parts, at first sight so probable;—I confess that, after this long study, and the researches which it requires, I have conceived, in consequence, a distrust of myself, a scepticism, a disdain of hypothetical systems, a decided predilection and exclusive taste for pure and rational observation, in short, a disheartening, which I had never felt before."

The best remedy of such feelings is to be found in the history of science. Kepler, when he had been driven to reject the solid epicycles of the ancients, or a person who had admired Kepler as M. Bourdon admires Buffon, but who saw that his magnetic virtue was an untenable fiction, might, in the same manner, have thrown up all hope of a sound theory of the causes of the celestial motions. But astronomers were too wise and too fortunate to yield to such despondency. The predecessors of Newton substituted a solid science of mechanics for the vague notions of Kepler; and the time soon came when Newton himself reduced the motions of the heavens to a law as distinctly conceived as the motions had been before.

[15] Bourdon, p. 274.

CHAPTER V.

Examination of the Nervous System, and consequent Speculations.

Sect. 1.—*The Examination of the Nervous System.*

It is hardly necessary to illustrate by further examples the manner in which anatomical observation has produced conjectural and hypothetical attempts to connect structure and action with some higher principle, of a more peculiarly physiological kind. But it may still be instructive to notice a case in which the principle, which is thus brought into view, is far more completely elevated above the domain of matter and mechanism than in those we have yet considered;—a case where we have not only irritation, but sensation;—not only life, but consciousness and will. A part of science in which such suggestions present themselves, brings us, in a very striking manner, to the passage from the physical to the hyperphysical sciences.

We have seen already, that Galen and his predecessors had satisfied themselves that the nerves are the channels of perception; a doctrine which had been distinctly taught by Herophilus[1] in the Alexandrian school. Herophilus, however, still combined, under

[1] Spr. i. 534.

this common name of nerves, the tendons; though he distinguished such nerves from those which arise from the brain and the spinal marrow, and which are subservient to the will. In Galen's time this subject had been prosecuted more into detail. That anatomist has left a Treatise expressly upon "The Anatomy of the Nerves;" in which he describes the successive *pairs* of nerves: thus, the first pair are the visual nerves: and we see, in the language which Galen uses, the evidence of the care and interest with which he had himself examined them. "These nerves," he says, "are not resolved into many fibres, like all the other nerves, when they reach the organs to which they belong; but spread out in a different and very remarkable manner, which it is not easy to describe or to believe, without actually seeing it." He then gives a description of the retina. In like manner he describes the second pair, which is distributed to the muscles of the eyes; the third and fourth, which go to the tongue and palate; and so on to the seventh pair. This division into seven pairs was established by Marinus[2], but Vesalius found it to be incomplete. The examination which is the basis of the present division of the nerves, was that of Willis. His book, entitled *Cerebri Anatome, cui accessit Nervorum descriptio et usus*, appeared at London in 1664. He made important additions to the knowledge of this subject[3]. Thus he is the first who describes in a

[2] Dic. Sc. Med. xxxv. 467. [3] Cuv. Sc. Nat. p. 385.

distinct manner what has been called the *'nervous centre'*[4], the pyramidal eminences which, according to more recent anatomists, are the communication of the brain with the spinal marrow: and of which the *decussation*, described by Santorini, affords the explanation of the action of a part of the brain upon the nerves of the opposite side. Willis proved also that the *rete mirabile*, the remarkable net-work of arteries at the base of the brain, observed by the ancients in ruminating animals, does not exist in man. He described the different pairs of nerves with more care than his predecessors; and his mode of numbering them is employed up to the present time. He calls the olfactory nerves the first pair; previously to him, these were not reckoned a pair: and thus the optic nerves were, as we have seen, called the first. He added the sixth and the ninth pairs, which the anatomists who preceded him did not reckon. Willis also examined carefully the different *ganglions*, or knots which occur upon the nerves. He traced them wherever they were to be found, and he gave a general figure of what Cuvier calls the *nervous skeleton*, very superior to that of Vesalius, which was coarse and inexact. Willis also made various efforts to show the connexion of the parts of the brain. In the earlier periods of anatomy, the brain had been examined by slicing it, so as to obtain a section. Varolius endeavoured to unravel it, and was followed by Willis. Vicq d'Azyr, in modern times, has carried the method of section to greater perfection than had

[4] Cuv. Sc. Nat. p. 385.

before been given it[5]; as Vieussens and Gall have done with respect to the method of Varolius and Willis. Recently, Professor Chaussier[6] makes three kinds of nerves:—the *encephalic*, which proceed from the head, and are twelve on each side;—the *rachidian*, which proceed from the spinal marrow, and are thirty on each side;—and *compound nerves*, among which is the *great sympathetic* nerve.

One of the most important steps ever made in our knowledge of the nerves is, the distinction which Bichat is supposed to have established, of a *ganglionic system*, and a *cerebral system*. And we may add, to the discoveries in nervous anatomy, the remarkable one, made in our own time by Sir Charles Bell and Mr. Mayo[7], that the two offices of conducting the motive impressions from the central seat of the will to the muscles, and of propagating sensations from the surface of the body and the external organs of sense to the sentient mind, reside in two distinct portions of the nervous substance:—a discovery which has been declared[8] to be "doubtless the most important accession to physiological (anatomical) knowledge since the time of Harvey."

[5] Cuv. p. 40. [6] Dict. Sc. Nat. xxxv. 467.

[7] Mayo's Physiology, p. 191. Mr. Mayo pointed out the necessity of dividing the nerves which proceed to the muscles of the mouth from *both* sides the face, before those muscles could be considered as detached from the brain.

[8] Dr. Charles Henry's Report of Brit. Asso. iii. p. 62.

Sect. 2.—The Consequent Speculations. Hypotheses respecting Life, Sensation, and Volition.

I SHALL not attempt to explain the details of these anatomical investigations; and I shall speak very briefly of the speculations which have been suggested by the obvious subservience of the nerves to life, sensation, and volition. Some general inferences from their distribution were sufficiently obvious; as, that the seat of sensation and volition is in the brain. Galen begins his work, on the Anatomy of the Nerves, thus: "That none of the members of the animal either exercises voluntary motion, or receives sensation, and that if the nerve be cut, the part immediately becomes inert and insensible, is acknowledged by all physicians. But that the origin of the nerves is partly from the brain, and partly from the spinal marrow, I proceed to explain." And in his work On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates, he proves at great length[9] that the brain is the origin of sensation and motion, refuting the opinions of earlier days, as that of Chrysippus[10], who placed the *hegemonic*, or master-principle of the soul, in the heart. But though Galen thought that the rational soul resides in the brain, he was disposed to agree with the poets and philosophers, according to whom the heart is the seat of courage and anger, and the liver the seat of love[11]. The faculties of the soul were

[9] Lib. 7. [10] Lib. iii. c. 1. [11] Lib. vi. c. 8.

by succeeding physiologists confined to the brain; but the disposition still showed itself, to attribute to them distinct localities. Thus Willis[12] places the imagination in the *corpus callosum*, the memory in the folds of the *hemispheres*, the perception in the *corpus striatum*. In more recent times, a system founded upon a similar view has been further developed by Gall and his followers. The germ of Gall's system may be considered as contained in that of Willis; for Gall represents the hemispheres as the folds of a great membrane which is capable of being unwrapped and spread out, and places the different faculties of man in the different regions of this membrane. The chasm which intervenes between matter and motion on the one side, and thought and feeling on the other, is brought into view by all such systems; but none of the hypotheses which they involve can effectually bridge it over.

The same observation may be made respecting the attempts to explain the manner in which the nerves operate as the instruments of sensation and volition. Perhaps a real step was made by Glisson[13], professor of medicine in the University of Cambridge, who distinguished in the fibres of the muscles of motion a peculiar property, different from any merely mechanical or physical action. His work *On the Nature of the Energetic Substance, or on the Life of Nature and of its Three First Faculties, The Perceptive,*

[12] Cuv. Sc. Nat. p. 384.

[13] Ib. p. 434.

Appetitive, and Motive, which was published in 1672, is rather metaphysical than physiological. But the principles which he establishes in this treatise he applies more specially to physiology in a treatise *On the Stomach and Intestines* (Amsterdam, 1677). In this he ascribes to the fibres of the animal body a peculiar power which he calls *irritability*. He divides *irritation* into natural, vital, and animal; and he points out, though briefly, the gradual differences of irritability in different organs. "It is hardly comprehensible," says Sprengel[14], "how this lucid and excellent notion of the Cambridge teacher was not accepted with greater alacrity, and further unfolded by his contemporaries." It has, however, since been universally adopted.

But though the discrimination of muscular irritability as a peculiar power might be a useful step in physiological research, the explanations hitherto offered, of the way in which the nerves operate on this irritability, and discharge their other offices, present only a series of hypotheses. Glisson[15] assumed the existence of certain vital spirits, which, according to him, are a mild, sweet fluid, resembling the spirituous part of white of egg, and residing in the nerves. This hypothesis, of a very subtle humour or spirit existing in the nerves, was indeed very early taken up[16]. This nervous spirit had been compared to air by Erasistratus, Asclepiades, Galen, and others. The chemical tendencies of the seventeenth century led to its being

[14] Spr. iv. 47. [15] Ib. iv. 38. [16] Haller, Physiol. iv. 365.

described as acid, sulphureous, or nitrous. At the end of that century, the hypothesis of an *ether* attracted much notice as a means of accounting for many phenomena; and this ether was identified with the nervous fluid. Newton himself inclines to this view, in the remarkable queries which are annexed to his "Optics." After ascribing many physical effects to his ether, he adds (Query 23), "Is not vision performed chiefly by the vibrations of this medium, excited in the bottom of the eye by the rays of light, and propagated through the solid, pellucid, and uniform capillamenta of the nerves into the place of sensation?" And (Query 24), "Is not animal motion performed by the vibrations of this medium, excited in the brain by the power of the will, and propagated from thence through the capillamenta of the nerves into the muscles for contracting and dilating them?" And an opinion approaching this has been adopted by some of the greatest of modern physiologists; as Haller, who says[17], that, though it is more easy to find what this nervous spirit is not than what it is, he conceives that, while it must be far too fine to be perceived by the sense, it must yet be more gross than fire, magnetism, or electricity; so that it may be contained in vessels, and confined by boundaries. And Cuvier speaks to the same effect[18]: "There is a great probability that it is by an imponderable fluid that the nerve acts on the fibre, and that this nervous

[17] Physiol. iv. 381, lib. x. sect. viii. § 15.

[18] Règne Animal, Introd. p. 30.

fluid is drawn from the blood, and secreted by the medullary matter."

Without presuming to dissent from such authorities on a point of anatomical probability, we may venture to observe, that these hypotheses do not tend at all to elucidate the physiological principle which is here involved; for this principle cannot be mechanical, chemical, or physical, and therefore cannot be better understood by embodying it in a fluid; the difficulty we have in conceiving what the moving force *is*, is not got rid of by explaining the machinery by which it is merely *transferred*. In tracing the phenomena of sensation and volition to their cause, it is clear that we must call in some peculiar and hyperphysical principle. The hypothesis of a fluid is not made more satisfactory by attenuating the fluid; it becomes subtle, spirituous, ethereal, imponderable, to no purpose; it must cease to be a fluid before its motions can become sensation and volition. This, indeed, is acknowledged by most physiologists; and strongly stated by Cuvier[10]. "The impression of external objects upon the ME, the production of a sensation, of an image, is a mystery impenetrable for our thoughts." And in several places, by the use of this peculiar phrase, "*the me*," (*le moi*,) for the sentient and volent faculty, he marks with peculiar appropriateness and force that phraseology borrowed from the world of matter will, in this subject, no longer answer our purpose.

[10] Règne Animal, Introd. p. 47.

We have here to go from nouns to pronouns, from things to persons. We pass from the body to the soul, from physics to metaphysics. We are come to the borders of material philosophy; the next step is into the domain of thought and mind. Here, therefore, we begin to feel that we have reached the boundaries of our present subject. The examination of that which lies beyond them must be reserved for a philosophy of another kind, and for the labours of the future; if we are ever enabled to make the attempt to extend into that loftier and wider scene, the principles which we gather on the ground we are now laboriously treading.

Such speculations as I have quoted respecting the nervous fluid, proceeding from some of the greatest philosophers who ever lived, prove only that hitherto the endeavour to comprehend the mystery of perception and will, of life and thought, have been fruitless and vain. Many anatomical truths have been discovered, but, so far as our survey has yet gone, no genuine physiological principle. All the trains of physiological research which we have followed have begun in exact examination of organization and function, and have ended in wide conjectures and arbitrary hypotheses. The stream of knowledge in all such cases is clear and lively at its outset; but, instead of reaching the great ocean of the general truths of science, it is gradually spread abroad among sands and deserts till its course can be traced no longer.

Hitherto, therefore, we must consider that we have

had to tell the story of the *failures* of physiological speculation. But of late there have come into view and use among physiologists certain principles which may be considered as peculiar to organized subjects; and of which the introduction forms a real advance in organical science. Though these have hitherto been very imperfectly developed, we must endeavour to exhibit, in some measure, their history and bearing.

CHAPTER VI.

Introduction of the Principle of Developed and Metamorphosed Symmetry.

Sect. 1.—*Vegetable Morphology. Göthe. De Candolle.*

Before we proceed to consider the progress of principles which belong to animal and human life, such as have just been pointed at, we must look round for such doctrines, if any such there be, as apply alike to all organized beings, conscious or unconscious, fixed or locomotive;—to the laws which regulate vegetable as well as animal forms and functions. Though we are very far from being able to present a clear and connected code of such laws, we may refer to one, at least, which appears to be of genuine authority and validity; and which is worthy our attention as an example of a properly organical or physiological principle, distinct from all mechanical, chemical, or other physical forces; and such as cannot even be conceived to be resolvable into those. I speak of the tendency which produces such results as have been brought together in recent speculations upon *Morphology*.

It may perhaps be regarded as an indication how peculiar are the principles of organic life, and how

far removed from any mere mechanical action, that the leading idea in these speculations was first strongly and effectively apprehended, not by a laborious experimenter and reasoner, but by a man of singularly brilliant and creative fancy; not by a mathematician or chemist, but by a poet. And we may add further, that this poet had already shown himself incapable of rightly apprehending the relation of physical facts to their principles; and had, in trying his powers on such subjects, exhibited a signal instance of the ineffectual and perverse operation of the method of philosophizing to which the constitution of his mind led him. The person of whom we speak, was John Wolfgang Göthe, who is held, by the unanimous voice of Europe, to have been one of the greatest poets of our own, or of any time, and whose "Doctrine of Colours" we have already had to describe, in the History of Optics, as an entire failure. Yet his views on the laws which connect the forms of plants into one simple system, have been generally accepted and followed up. We might almost be led to think that this writer's poetical endowments had contributed to this scientific discovery;—the love of beauty of form, by fixing the attention upon the symmetry of plants; and the creative habit of thought, by making constant developement a familiar process[1].

[1] We may quote some of the poet's own verses as an illustration of his feelings on this subject. They are addressed to a lady.

Dich verwirret, geliebte, die tausendfältige mischung
Dieses blumengewühls über dem garten umher;

But though we cannot but remark the peculiarity of our being indebted to a poet for the discovery of a scientific principle, we must not forget that he himself held, that in making this step, he had been guided, not by his invention, but by observation. He repelled, with extreme repugnance, the thought that he had substituted fancy for fact, or imposed ideal laws on actual things. While he was earnestly pursuing his morphological speculations, he attempted to impress them upon Schiller. "I expounded to him, in as lively a manner as possible, the metamorphosis of plants, drawing on paper, with many characteristic strokes, a symbolic plant before his eyes. He heard me," Göthe says[2], "with much interest and distinct comprehension; but when I had done, he shook his head, and said, 'That is not experience; that is an idea:' I stopt with some degree of irritation; for the point which separated us was marked most luminously by this expression." And in the

Viele namen hörest du an, und immer verdränget,
Mit barbarischem klang, einer den andern im ohr.
Alle gestalten sind ähnlich und keine gleichet der andern;
Und so deutet das chor auf ein geheimes gesetz,
Auf ein heiliges räthsel. O! könnte ich dich, liebliche freundinn,
Ueberliefern so gleich glücklich das lösende wort.

Thou, my love, art perplext with the endless seeming confusion
Of the luxuriant wealth which in the garden is spread;
Name upon name thou hearest, and in thy dissatisfied hearing,
With a barbarian noise one drives another along.
All the forms resemble, yet none is the same as another;
Thus the whole of the throng points at a deep hidden law,
Points at a sacred riddle. Oh! could I to thee, my beloved friend,
Whisper the fortunate word by which the riddle is read!

[2] Zur Morphologie, p. 24.

same work he relates his botanical studies and his habit of observation, from which it is easily seen that no common amount of knowledge and notice of details, were involved in the course of thought which led him to the principle of the Metamorphosis of Plants.

Before I state the history of this principle, I may be allowed to endeavour to communicate to the reader, to whom this subject is new, some conception of the principle itself. This will not be difficult, if he will imagine to himself a flower, for instance, a common dog-rose, or the blossom of an apple-tree, as consisting of a series of parts disposed in *whorls*, placed one over another on an *axis*. The lowest whorl is the calyx with its five sepals; above this is the corolla with its five petals; above this are a multitude of stamens, which may be considered as separate whorls of five each, often repeated; above these is a whorl composed of the ovaries, or what become the seed-vessels in the fruit, which are five united together in the apple, but indefinite in number and separate in the rose. Now the morphological view is this;—that the members of each of these whorls are in their nature identical, and the same as if they were whorls of ordinary leaves, brought together by the shortening their common axis, and modified in form by the successive elaboration of their nutriment. Further, according to this view, a whorl of leaves itself is to be considered as identical with several detached leaves dispersed spirally along the axis, and brought together because the axis is shortened.

Thus all the parts of a plant are, or at least represent, the successive metamorphoses of the same elementary member. The root-leaves thus pass into the common leaves;—these into bracteæ;—these into the sepals;—these into the petals;—these into the stamens with their anthers;—these into the ovaries with their styles and stigmas;—these ultimately become the fruit; and thus we are finally led to the seed of a new plant.

Moreover the same notion of metamorphosis may be applied to explain the existence of flowers which are not symmetrical like those we have just referred to, but which have an irregular corolla, or calyx. The papilionaceous flower of the pea tribe, which is so markedly irregular, may be deduced by easy gradations from the regular flower, (through the *mimoseæ*,) by expanding one petal, joining together two others, and modifying the form of the intermediate ones.

Without attempting to go into detail respecting the proofs of that identity of all the different organs, and all the different forms of plants, which is thus asserted, we may observe, that it rests on such grounds as these;—the transformations which the parts of flowers undergo by accidents of nutriment or exposure. Such changes, considered as monstrosities where they are very remarkable, show the tendencies and possibilities belonging to the organization in which they occur. For instance, the single wild-rose, by culture, transforms many of its numerous stamens into petals, and thus acquires the deeply folded flower of the

double garden-rose. We cannot doubt of the reality of this change, for we often see stamens in which it is incomplete. In other cases we find petals becoming leaves, and a branch growing out of the centre of the flower. Some pear-trees, when in blossom, are remarkable for their tendency to such monstrosities[3]. Again, we find that flowers which are usually irregular, occasionally become regular, and conversely. The common snap-dragon (*Linaria vulgaris*) affords a curious instance of this[4]. The usual form of this plant is "personate," the corolla being divided into two lobes, which differ in form, and together present somewhat the appearance of an animal's face; and the upper portion of the corolla is prolonged backwards into a tube-like "spur." No flower can be more irregular; but there is a singular variety of this plant, termed *Peloria*, in which the corolla is strictly symmetrical, consisting of a conical tube, narrowed in front, elongated behind into five equal spurs, and containing five stamens of equal length, instead of the two unequal pairs of the didynamous Linaria. These and the like appearances show that there is in nature a capacity for, and tendency to, such changes as the doctrine of metamorphosis asserts.

Göthe's *Metamorphosis of Plants* was published in 1790: and his system was the result of his own independent course of thought. The view which it involved was not, however, absolutely new, though it had never before been unfolded in so distinct and

[3] Lindley, Nat. Syst. p. 84.

[4] Henslow, Principles of Botany, p. 116.

persuasive a manner. Linnæus considered the leaves, calyx, corolla, stamens, each as evolved in succession from the other; and spoke of it as *prolepsis* or *anticipation*[5], when the leaves changed accidentally into bracteæ, these into a calyx, this into a corolla, the corolla into stamens, or these into the pistil. And Caspar Frederick Wolf apprehended in a more general manner the same principle. "In the whole plant," says he[6], "we see nothing but leaves and stalk;" and in order to prove what is the situation of the leaves in all their later forms, he adduces the cotyledons as the first leaves.

Göthe was led to his system on this subject by his general views of nature. He saw, he says[7], that a whole life of talent and labour was requisite to enable any one to arrrange the infinitely copious organic forms of a single kingdom of nature. "Yet I felt," he adds, "that for me there must be another way, analogous to the rest of my habits. The appearance of the changes, round and round, of organic creatures had taken strong hold on my mind. Imagination and Nature appeared to me to vie with each other which could go on most boldly yet most consistently." His observation of nature, directed by such a thought, led him to the doctrine of the metamorphosis.

In a later republication of his work (*Zur Morphologie*, 1817,) he gives a very agreeable account of the

[5] Sprengel, Bot. ii. 302. Amœn. Acad. vi. 324, 365.

[6] Nov. Com. Ac. Petrop. xii. 403, xiii. 478.

[7] Zur Morph. i. 30.

various circumstances which affected the reception and progress of his doctrine. Willdenow[8] quoted him thus, "The life of plants is, as Mr. Göthe very prettily says, an expansion and contraction, and these alternations make the various periods of life." "This '*prettily*,'" says Göthe, "I can be well content with, but the '*egregie*' of Usteri is much more pretty and obliging." Usteri had used this term respecting Göthe in an edition of Jussieu.

The application of the notion of metamorphosis to the explanation of double and monstrous flowers had been made previously, by Jussieu. Göthe's merit was, to have referred to it the *regular* formation of the flower. And as Sprengel justly says[9], his view had so profound a meaning, made so strong an appeal by its simplicity, and was so fruitful in the most valuable consequences, that it was not to be wondered at if it occasioned further examination of the subject; although many persons pretended to slight it. The task of confirming and verifying the doctrine by a general application of it to all cases,—a labour so important and necessary after the promulgation of any great principle,—Göthe himself did not execute. At first he collected specimens and made drawings with some such view[10], but he was interrupted and diverted to other matters. "And now," says he, in his later publication, "when I look back on this undertaking, it is easy to see that the

[8] Zur Morph. i. 121. [9] Gesch. Botan. ii. 304.
[10] Zur Morph. i. 129.

object which I had before my eyes was, for me, in my position, with my habits and mode of thinking, unattainable. For it was no less than this: that I was to take that which I had stated in general, and presented to the conception, to the mental intuition, in words; and that I should, in a particularly visible, orderly, and gradual manner, present it to the eye; so as to show to the outward sense that out of the germ of this idea might grow a tree of physiology fit to overshadow the world."

Voigt, professor at Jena, was one of the first who adopted Göthe's view into an elementary work, which he did in 1808. Other botanists laboured in the direction which had thus been pointed out. Of those who have thus contributed to the establishment and developement of the metamorphic doctrine, Professor De Candolle, of Geneva, is perhaps the most important. His Theory of Developement rests upon two main principles, *abortion* and *adhesion*. By considering some parts as degenerated or absent through the abortion of the buds which might have formed them, and other parts as adhering together, he holds that all plants may be reduced to perfect symmetry: and the actual and constant occurrence of such incidents is shown beyond all doubt. And thus the snap-dragon, of which we have spoken above, is derived from the Peloria, which is the normal condition of the flower, by the abortion of one stamen, and the degeneration of two others. Such examples are too numerous to need to be dwelt on.

Sect. 2.—Application of Vegetable Morphology.

THE doctrine, being thus fully established, has been applied to solve different problems in botany; for instance, to explain the structure of flowers which appear at first sight to deviate widely from the usual forms of the vegetable world. We have an instance of such an application in Mr. Robert Brown's explanation of the real structure of various plants which had been entirely misunderstood: as, for example, the genus *Euphorbia*. In this plant he showed that what had been held to be a jointed filament, was a pedicel with a filament above it, the intermediate corolla having evanesced. In *Orchideæ*, (the orchis tribe,) he showed that the peculiar structure of the plant arose from its having six stamens (two sets of three each), of which five are usually abortive. In *Coniferæ*, (the cone-bearing trees,) it was made to appear that the seed was naked, while the accompanying appendage, corresponding to a seed-vessel, assumed all forms, from a complete leaf to a mere scale. In like manner it was proved that the *pappus*, or down of *composite* plants, (as thistles,) is a transformed calyx.

Along with this successful application of a profound principle, it was natural that other botanists should make similar attempts. Thus Mr. Lindley was led to take a view[11] of the structure of *Reseda* (mignonette) different from that usually entertained;

[11] Lindley, Brit. Assoc. Report, iii. 50.

which, when published, attracted a good deal of attention, and gained some converts among the botanists of Germany and France. But in 1833, Mr. Lindley says, with great candour, "Lately, Professor Henslow has satisfactorily proved, in part by the aid of a monstrosity in the common *Mignonette*, in part by a severe application of morphological rules, that my hypothesis must necessarily be false." Such an agreement of different botanists respecting the consequences of morphological rules, proves the reality and universality of the rules.

We find, therefore, that a principle which we may call the *Principle of Developed and Metamorphosed Symmetry*, is firmly established and recognised, and familiarly and successfully applied by botanists. And it will be apparent, on reflection, that though *symmetry* is a notion which applies to inorganic as well as to organic things, and is, in fact, a conception of certain relations of space and position, such *developement* and *metamorphosis* as are here spoken of, are ideas entirely different from any of those to which the physical sciences have led us in our previous survey; and are, in short, genuine *organical* or *physiological* ideas;—real elements of the philosophy of *life*.

We must, however imperfectly, endeavour to trace the application of this idea in the other great department of the world of life; we must follow the history of animal morphology.

CHAPTER VII.

Progress of Animal Morphology.

Sect. 1.—*Rise of Comparative Anatomy.*

The most general and constant relations of the form of the organs, both in plants and animals, are the most natural grounds of classification. Hence the first scientific classifications of animals are the first steps in animal morphology. At first, a *zoology* was constructed by arranging animals, as plants were at first arranged, according to their external parts. But in the course of the researches of the anatomists of the seventeenth century, it was seen that the internal structure of animals offered resemblances and transitions of a far more coherent and philosophical kind, and the science of *comparative anatomy* rose into favour and importance. Among the main cultivators of this science[1] at the period just mentioned, we find Francis Redi, of Arezzo; Guichard-Joseph Duvernay, who was for sixty years professor of anatomy at the Jardin du Roi at Paris, and during this lapse of time had for his pupils almost all the greatest anatomists of the greater part of the eighteenth century; Nehemiah Grew, secretary to

[1] Cuv. Leçons sur l'Hist. des Sc. Nat. 414, 420.

the Royal Society of London, whose "Anatomy of Plants" we have already noticed.

But comparative anatomy, which had been cultivated with ardour to the end of the seventeenth century, was, in some measure, neglected during the first two-thirds of the eighteenth. The progress of botany was, Cuvier sagaciously suggests[2], one cause of this; for that science had made its advances by confining itself to external characters, and rejecting anatomy; and though Linnæus acknowledged the dependence of zoology upon anatomy[3] so far as to make the number of teeth his characters, even this was felt, in his method, as a bold step. But his influence was soon opposed by that of Buffon, Daubenton, and Pallas; who again brought into view the importance of comparative anatomy in zoology; at the same time that Haller proved how much might be learnt from it in physiology. John Hunter in England, the two Munros in Scotland, Camper in Holland, and Vicq d'Azyr in France, were the first to follow the path thus pointed out. Camper threw the glance of genius on a host of interesting objects, but almost all that he produced was a number of sketches; Vicq d'Azyr, more assiduous, was stopt in the midst of a most brilliant career by a premature death.

Such is Cuvier's outline of the earlier history of comparative anatomy. We shall not go into detail upon this subject; but we may observe that such

[2] Cuv. Hist. Sc. Nat. i. 301. [3] Ib.

studies had fixed in the minds of naturalists the conviction of the possibility and the propriety of considering large divisions of the animal kingdom as modifications of one common *type*. Belon, as early as 1555, had placed the skeleton of a man and of a bird side by side, and shown the correspondence of parts. So far as the case of vertebrated animals extends, this correspondence is generally allowed; although it required some ingenuity to detect its details in some cases; for instance, to see the analogy of parts between the head of a man and of a fish.

In tracing these less obvious correspondencies, some curious steps have been made in recent times. And here we must, I conceive, again ascribe no small merit to the same remarkable man who, as we have already had to point out, gave so great an impulse to vegetable morphology. Göthe, whose talent and disposition for speculating on all parts of nature were truly admirable, was excited to the study of anatomy by his propinquity to the Duke of Weimar's cabinet of natural history. In 1786, he published a little essay, the object of which was to show that in man, as well as in beasts, the upper jaw contains an intermaxillary bone, although the sutures are obliterated. After 1790[4], animated and impelled by the same passion for natural observation and for general views which had produced his metamorphosis of plants, he pursued his speculations on these subjects eagerly and successfully. And in

[4] Zur Morphologie, i. 234.

1795, he published a "Sketch of a Universal Introduction into Comparative Anatomy, beginning with Osteology;" in which he attempts to establish an "osteological type," to which skeletons of all animals may be referred. I do not pretend that Göthe's anatomical works have had any influence on the progress of the science comparable with that which has been exercised by the labours of professional anatomists; but the ingenuity and value of the views which they contained was acknowledged by the best authorities; and the clearer introduction and application of the principle of developed and metamorphosed symmetry may be dated from about this time. Göthe declares that, at an early period of these speculations, he was convinced[5] that the bony head of beasts is to be derived from six vertebræ. In 1807, Oken published a "Program" *On the Signification of the Bones of the Skull*, in which he maintained that these bones are equivalent to four vertebræ; and Meckel, in his Comparative Anatomy, in 1811, also resolved the skull into vertebræ. But Spix, in his elaborate work *Cephalogenesis*, in 1815, reduced the vertebræ of the head to three. "Oken," he says[6], "published opinions merely theoretical, and consequently contrary to those maintained in this work, which are drawn from observation." This resolution of the head into vertebræ is assented to by many of the best physiologists, as explaining the distribution of the nerves, and other phenomena. Spix further attempted to apply it to the heads of fishes; and

[5] Zur Morphologie, i. 250.

[6] Spix, Cephalogenesis.

Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire put forth a similar doctrine in his "Philosophie Anatomique," in 1818; and asserted that he had not previously seen the work of Spix. We cannot fail to recognise here the attempt to apply to the skeleton of animals the principle which leads botanists to consider all the parts of a flower as transformations of the same organs. How far the application of the principle, as here proposed, is just, I must leave philosophical physiologists to decide.

By these and similar researches, it is held by the best physiologists that the skull of all vertebrate animals is pretty well reduced to a uniform structure, and the laws of its variations nearly determined[7].

The vertebrate animals being thus reduced to a single type, the question arises how far this can be done with regard to other animals, and how many such types there are. And here we come to one of the important services which Cuvier rendered to natural history.

Sect. 2.—Distinction of the General Types of the Forms of Animals.—Cuvier.

ANIMALS were divided by Lamarck into vertebrate and invertebrate; and the general analogies of all vertebrate animals are easily made manifest. But with regard to other animals, the point is far from clear. Cuvier was the first to give a really philo-

[7] Cuv. Hist. Sc. Nat. iii. 442.

sophical view of the animal world in reference to the plan on which each animal is constructed. There are[8], he says, four such plans;—four forms on which animals appear to have been modelled; and of which the ulterior divisions, with whatever titles naturalists have decorated them, are only very slight modifications, founded on the developement or addition of some parts which do not produce any essential change in the plan.

These four great branches of the animal world are the *vertebrata*, *mollusca*, *articulata*, *radiata*; and the differences of these are so important that a slight explanation of them may be permitted.

The *vertebrata* are those animals which (as man and other sucklers, birds, fishes, lizards, frogs, serpents,) have a back-bone and a skull with lateral appendages, within which the viscera are included, and to which the muscles are attached.

The *mollusca*, or soft animals, have no bony skeleton; the muscles are attached to the skin, which often includes stony plates called shells; such molluscs are shell-fish, others are cuttle-fish, and many pulpy sea-animals.

The *articulata* consist of *crustacea*, (lobsters, &c.,) *insects*, *spiders*, and *annulose worms*, which, like the other classes of this branch, consist of a head and a number of successive portions of the body jointed together, whence the name.

Finally, the *radiata* include the animals known under the name of *zoophytes*. In the preceding

[8] Règne Animal, p. 57.

three branches, the organs of motion and of sense were distributed symmetrically on the two sides of an axis, so that the animal has a right and a left side. In the radiata the similar members radiate from the axis in a circular manner, like the petals of a regular flower.

The whole value of such a classification cannot be understood without explaining its use in enabling us to give general descriptions, and general laws of the animal functions of the classes which it includes; but in the present part of our work our business is to exhibit it as an exemplification of the reduction of animals to laws of symmetry. The bipartite symmetry of the form of vertebrate and articulate animals is obvious; and the reduction of the various forms of such animals to a common type has been effected, by attention to their anatomy, in a manner which has satisfied those who have best studied the subject. The molluscs, especially those in which the head disappears, as oysters, or those which are rolled into a spiral, as snails, have a less obvious symmetry, but here also we can apply certain general types. And the symmetry of the radiated zoophytes is of a nature quite different from all the rest, and approaching, as we have suggested, to the kind of symmetry found in plants. Some naturalists have doubted whether[9] these zoophytes are not referrible to two types (*acrita* or polypes, and true *radiata*), rather than to one.

This fourfold division was introduced by Cuvier[10].

[9] Brit. Assoc. Rep. iv. 227.

[10] Règne An. 61.

Before him, naturalists followed Linnæus, and divided non-vertebrate animals into two classes, insects and worms. "I began," says Cuvier, "to attack this view of the subject, and offered another division, in a Memoir read at the Society of Natural History of Paris, the 21st of Floreal, in the year III. of the Republic, (May 10, 1795,) printed in the *Decade Philosophique:* in this, I mark the characters and the limits of molluscs, insects, worms, echinoderms, and zoophytes. I distinguished the red-blooded worms or annelides, in a Memoir read to the Institute, the 11th Nivose, year X. (December 31, 1801). I afterwards distributed these different classes into three branches, each co-ordinate to the branch formed by the vertebrate animals, in a Memoir read to the Institute in July, 1812, printed in the *Annales du Muscum d'Histoire Naturelle,* tom. xix." His great systematic work, the *Règne Animal,* founded on this distribution, was published in 1817; and since that time the division has been commonly accepted among naturalists.

Sect. 3.—*Attempts to establish the Identity of the Types of Animal Forms.*

Supposing this great step in Zoology, of which we have given an account,—the reduction of all animals to four types or plans,—to be quite secure, we are then led to ask whether any further advance is possible;—whether several of these types can be referred to one common form by any wider effort of genera-

lisation. On this question there has been a considerable difference of opinion. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire[11], who had previously endeavoured to show that all vertebrate animals were constructed so exactly upon the same plan as to preserve the strictest analogy of parts in respect to their osteology, thought to extend this unity of plan by demonstrating, that the hard parts of crustaces and insects are still only modifications of the skeleton of higher animals, and that therefore the type of vertebrata must be made to include them also:—the segments of the articulata are held to be strictly analogous to the vertebræ of the higher animals, and thus the former live *within* their vertebral column in the same manner as the latter live *without* it. Attempts have even been made to reduce molluscous and vertebrate animals to a community of type, as we shall see shortly.

Another application of the principle, according to which creatures the most different are developements of the same original type, may be discerned[12] in the doctrine, that the embryo of the higher forms of animal life passes by gradations through those forms which are permanent in inferior animals. Thus, according to this view, the human fœtus assumes successively, the plan of the zoophyte, the worm, the fish, the turtle, the bird, the beast. But it has been well observed, that "in these analogies we look in vain for the precision which can alone support the inference that has been deduced[13];" and that at

[11] Mr. Jenyns, Brit. Assoc. Rep. iv. 150.

[12] Dr. Clark, Report, Ib. iv. 113. [13] Dr. Clark, p. 114.

each step, the higher embryo and the lower animal which it is supposed to resemble, differ in having each different organs suited to their respective destinations.

Cuvier[14] never assented to this view, nor to the attempts to refer the different divisions of his system to a common type. "He could not admit," says his biographer, "that the lungs or gills of the vertebrates are in the same connexion as the branchiæ of molluscs and crustaces, which in the one are situated at the base of the feet, or fixed on the feet themselves, and in the other often on the back or about the arms. He did not admit the analogy between the skeleton of the vertebrates and the skin of the articulates; he could not believe that the tænia and the sepia were constructed on the same plan; that there was a similarity of composition between the bird and the echinus, the whale and the snail; in spite of the skill with which some persons sought gradually to efface their discrepancies."

Whether it may be possible to establish, among the four great divisions of the "Animal Kingdom," some analogies of a higher order than those which prevail within each division, I do not pretend to conjecture. If this can be done, it is clear that it must be by comparing the types of these divisions under their most general forms: and thus Cuvier's arrangement, so far as it is itself rightly founded on the unity of composition of each branch, is the surest step to the discovery of a unity pervading and

[14] Laurillard, Elog. de Cuvier, p. 66.

uniting these branches. But though those who generalise surely, and those who generalise rapidly, may travel in the same direction, they soon separate so widely, that they appear to move from each other. The partisans of a universal "unity of composition" of animals, accused Cuvier of being too inert in following the progress of physiological and zoological science. Borrowing their illustration from the political parties of the times, they asserted that he belonged to the science of the *resistance*, not to the science of the *movement*. Such a charge is highly honourable to him; for no one acquainted with the history of zoology can doubt that he had a great share in the impulse by which the "movement" was occasioned; or that he himself made a large advance with it; and it was because he was so poised by the vast mass of his knowledge, so temperate in his love of doubtful generalisations, that he was not swept on in the wilder part of the stream. To such a charge, moderate reformers, who appreciate the value of the good which exists, though they try to make it better, and who know the knowledge, thoughtfulness, and caution, which are needful in such a task, are naturally exposed. For us, who can only decide on such a subject by the general analogies of the history of science, it may suffice to say, that it appears doubtful whether the fundamental conceptions of affinity, analogy, transition, and developement, have yet been fixed in the minds of physiologists with sufficient firmness and clearness, or unfolded with sufficient consistency and generality, to make it

likely that any great additional step of this kind can for some time be made.

We have here considered the doctrine of the identity of the seemingly various types of animal structure, as an attempt to extend the correspondencies which were the basis of Cuvier's division of the animal kingdom. But this doctrine has been put forwards in another point of view, as the antithesis to the doctrine of final causes. This question is so important a one, that we cannot help attempting to give some view of its state and bearings.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Doctrine of Final Causes in Physiology.

Sect. 1.—*Assertion of the Principle of Unity of Plan.*

We have repeatedly seen, in the course of our historical view of physiology, that those who have studied the structure of animals and plants, have had a conviction forced upon them, that the organs are constructed and combined in subservience to the life and functions of the whole. The parts have a purpose, as well as a law;—we can trace final causes, as well as laws of causation. This principle is peculiar to physiology; and it might naturally be expected that, in the progress of the science, it would come under special consideration. This accordingly has happened; and the principle has been drawn into a prominent position by the struggle of two antagonist schools of physiologists. On the one hand, it has been maintained that this doctrine of final causes is altogether unphilosophical, and requires to be replaced by a more comprehensive and profound principle: on the other hand, it is asserted that the doctrine is not only true, but that, in our own time, it has been fixed and developed so as to

become the instrument of some of the most important discoveries which have been made. Of the views of these two schools we must endeavour to give some account.

The disciples of the former of the two schools express their tenets by the phrases *unity* of *plan*, *unity* of *composition;* and the more detailed developement of these doctrines has been termed the *Theory of Analogues*, by Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, who claims this theory as his own creation. According to this theory, the structure and functions of animals are to be studied by the guide of their analogy only; our attention is to be turned, not to the fitness of the organization for any end of life or action, but to its resemblance to other organizations by which it is gradually derived from the original type.

According to the rival view of this subject, we must not assume, and cannot establish, that the plan of all animals is the same, or their composition similar. The existence of a single and universal system of analogies in the construction of all animals is entirely unproved, and therefore cannot be made our guide in the study of their properties. On the other hand, the plan of the animal, the purpose of its organization in the support of its life, the necessity of the functions to its existence, are truths which are irresistibly apparent, and which may therefore be safely taken as the bases of our reasonings. This view has been put forwards as the doctrine of the *conditions of existence:* it may also be described as the principle of *a purpose in organization;* the structure

being considered as having the function for its end. We must say a few words on each of these views.

It had been pointed out by Cuvier, as we have seen in the last chapter, that the animal kingdom may be divided into four great branches; in each of which the *plan* of the animal is different, namely, *vertebrata, articulata, mollusca, radiata.* Now the question naturally occurs, is there really no resemblance of construction in these different classes? It was maintained by some, that there is such a resemblance. In 1820[1], M. Audouin, a young naturalist of Paris, endeavoured to fill up the chasm which separates insects from other animals; and by examining carefully the portions which compose the solid frame-work of insects, and following them through their various transformations in different classes, he conceived that he found relations of position and function, and often of number and form, which might be compared with the relations of the parts of the skeleton in vertebrate animals. He thought that the first segment of an insect, the head[2], represents one of the three vertebræ which, according to Spix and others, compose the vertebrate head: the second segment of the insects, (the *prothorax* of Audouin,) is, according to M. Geoffroy, the second vertebra of the head of the vertebrata, and so on. Upon this speculation Cuvier[3] does not give any decided opinion; observing only, that even if false, it leads to active thought and useful research.

[1] Cuv. Hist. Sc. Nat. iii. 422.

[2] Ib. 437.

[3] Ib. 441.

But when an attempt was further made to identify the plan of another branch of the animal world, the mollusca, with that of the vertebrata, the radical opposition between such views and those of Cuvier, broke out into an animated controversy.

Two French anatomists, MM. Laurencet and Meyranx, presented to the Academy of Sciences, in 1830, a Memoir containing their views on the organization of molluscous animals; and on the sepia or cuttle-fish in particular, as one of the most complete examples of such animals. These creatures, indeed, though thus placed in the same division with shell-fish of the most defective organization and obscure structure, are far from being scantily organized. They have a brain[4], often eyes, and these in the animals of this class (*cephalopoda*) are more complicated than in any vertebrates[5]; they have sometimes ears, salivary glands, multiple stomachs, a considerable liver, a bile, a complete double circulation, provided with auricles and ventricles; in short, their vital activity is vigorous, and their senses are distinct.

But still, though this organization, in the abundance and diversity of its parts, approaches that of vertebrate animals, it had not been considered as composed in the same manner, or arranged in the same order. Cuvier had always maintained that the

[4] Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire denies this. Principes de Phil. Zoologique discutés en 1830, p. 68.

[5] Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Principes de Philosophie Zoologique discutés en 1830, p. 55.

plan of molluscs is not a continuation of the plan of vertebrates.

MM. Laurencet and Meyranx, on the contrary, conceived that the sepia might be reduced to the type of a vertebrate creature, by considering the back-bone of the latter bent double backwards, so as to bring the root of the tail to the nape of the neck; the parts thus brought into contact being supposed to coalesce. By this mode of conception, these anatomists held that the viscera were placed in the same connexion as in the vertebrate type, and the functions exercised in an analogous manner.

To decide on the reality of the analogy thus asserted, clearly belonged to the jurisdiction of the most eminent anatomists and physiologists. The Memoir was committed to Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Latreille, two eminent zoologists, in order to be reported on. Their report was extremely favourable; and went almost to the length of adopting the views of the authors.

Cuvier expressed some dissatisfaction with this report on its being read[6]; and a short time afterwards[7], represented Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire as having asserted that the new views of Laurencet and Meyranx refuted completely the notion of the great interval which exists between molluscous and vertebrate animals. Geoffroy protested against such an interpretation of his expressions; but it soon appeared, by the controversial character which the dis-

[6] Princ. de Phil. Zool. discutés en 1830, p. 36. [7] p. 50.

cussions on this and several other subjects assumed, that a real opposition of opinions was in action.

Without attempting to explain the exact views of Geoffroy, (we may, perhaps, venture to say that they are hardly yet generally understood with sufficient distinctness to justify the mere historian of science in attempting such an explanation,) their general tendency may be sufficiently collected from what has been said; and from the phrases in which his views are conveyed[8]. *The principle of connexions, the elective affinities of organic elements, the equilibrization of organs*;—such are the designations of the leading doctrines which are unfolded in the preliminary discourse of his *Anatomical Philosophy*. Elective affinities of organic elements are the forces by which the vital structures and varied forms of living things are produced; and the principles of connexion and equilibrium of these forces in the various parts of the organization, prescribe limits and conditions to the variety and developement of such forms.

The character and tendency of this philosophy will be, I think, much more clear, if we consider what it excludes and denies. It rejects altogether all conception of a plan and purpose in the organs of animals, as a principle which has determined their forms, or can be of use in directing our reasonings. "I take care," says Geoffroy[9], "not to ascribe to God any intention." And when Cuvier speaks of

[8] Phil. Zool. 15.

[9] « Je me garde de prêter à Dieu aucune intention." Phil. Zool. 10.

the combination of organs in such order that they may be in consistence with the part which the animal *has to play* in nature; his rival rejoins[10], "I know nothing of animals which *have to play* a part in nature." Such a notion is, he holds, unphilosophical and dangerous. It is an abuse of final causes which makes the cause to be engendered by the effect. And to illustrate still further his own view, he says, "I have read concerning fishes, that because they live in a medium which resists more than air, their motive forces are calculated so as to give them the power of progression under those circumstances. By this mode of reasoning, you would say of a man who makes use of crutches, that he was originally destined to the misfortune of having a leg paralyzed or amputated."

How far this doctrine of unity in the plan in animals is admissible or probable in physiology when kept within proper limits, that is, when not put in opposition to the doctrine of a purpose involved in the plan of animals, I do not pretend even to conjecture. The question is one which appears to be at present deeply occupying the minds of the most learned and profound physiologists; and such persons alone, adding to their knowledge and zeal, judicial sagacity and impartiality, can tell us what is the general tendency of the best researches on this subject[11]. But when the anatomist expresses such

[10] "Je ne connais point d'animal qui DOIVE jouer un rôle dans la nature." p. 65.

[11] So far as this doctrine is generally accepted among the best

opinions, and defends them by such illustrations as those which I have just quoted[18], we perceive that he quits the entrenchments of his superior science, in which he might have remained unassailable so long as the question was a professional one; and the discussion is open to those who possess no peculiar knowledge of anatomy. We shall, therefore, venture to say a few words upon it.

Sect. 2.—*Estimate of the Doctrine of Unity of Plan.*

It has been so often repeated, and so generally allowed in modern times, that final causes ought not to be made our guides in natural philosophy, that a prejudice has been established against the introduction of any views to which this designation can be applied, into physical speculations. Yet, in fact, the assumption of an end or purpose in the structure of organized beings, appears to be an intellectual habit which no efforts can cast off. It has prevailed from the earliest to the latest ages of zoological research;

physiologists, we cannot doubt the propriety of Meckel's remarks, (Comparative Anatomy, 1821, Pref. p. xi.) that it cannot be truly asserted either to be new, or to be peculiarly due to Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire.

[18] It is hardly worth while answering such illustrations, but I may remark, that the one quoted above, irrelevant and unbecoming as it is, tells altogether against its author. The fact that the wooden leg is of the same length as the other, proves, and would satisfy the most incredulous man, that it was *intended* for walking.

appears to be fastened upon us alike by our ignorance and our knowledge; and has been formally accepted by so many great anatomists, that we cannot feel any scruple in believing the rejection of it to be a superstition of a false philosophy, and a result of the exaggeration of other principles which are supposed capable of superseding its use. And the doctrine of unity of plan of all animals, and the other principles associated with this doctrine, so far as they exclude the conviction of an intelligible scheme and a discoverable end, in the organization of animals, appear to be utterly erroneous. I will offer a few reasons for an opinion which may appear presumptuous in a writer who has only a general knowledge of the subject.

1. In the first place, it appears to me that the argumentation on the case in question, the sepia, does by no means turn out to the advantage of the new hypothesis. The arguments in support of the hypothetical view of the structure of this mollusc were, that by this view the relative position of the parts was explained, and conformations which had appeared altogether anomalous, were reduced to rule; for example, the beak, which had been supposed to be in a position the reverse of all other beaks, was shown, by the assumed posture, to have its upper mandible longer than the lower, and thus to be regularly placed. "But," says Cuvier[13], "supposing the pos-

[13] G. S. H. Phil. Zool. p. 70.

ture, in order that the side on which the funnel of the sepia is folded should be the back of the animal, considered as similar to a vertebrate, the brain with regard to the beak, and the œsophagus with regard to the liver, should have positions corresponding to those in vertebrates; but the positions of these organs are exactly contrary to the hypothesis. How, then, can you say," he asks, "that the cephalopods and vertebrates have *identity of composition*, *unity of composition*, without using words in a sense entirely different from their common meaning?"

This argument appears to be exactly of the kind on which the value of the hypothesis must depend[14]. It is, therefore, interesting to see the reply made to it by the theorist. It is this: "I admit the facts here stated, but I deny that they lead to the notion of a different sort of animal composition. Molluscous animals had been placed too high in the zoological scale; but if they are only the embryos of its lower stages, if they are only beings in which

[14] I do not dwell on other arguments which were employed. It was given as a circumstance suggesting the supposed posture of the type, that in this way the back was coloured, and the belly was white. On this Cuvier observes[15], "I must say, that I do not know any naturalist so ignorant as to suppose that the back is determined by its dark colour, or even by its position when the animal is in motion; they all know that the badger has a black belly and a white back; that an infinity of other animals, especially among insects, are in the same case; and that many fishes swim on their side, or with their belly upwards."

[15] Phil. Zool. p. 39, 68.

far fewer organs come into play, it does not follow that the organs are destitute of the relations which the power of successive generations may demand. The organ A will be in an unusual relation with the organ C, if B has not been produced;—if a stoppage of the developement has fallen upon this latter organ, and has thus prevented its production. And thus," he says, "we see how we may have different arrangements, and diverse constructions as they appear to the eye."

It seems to me that such a concession as this entirely destroys the theory which it attempts to defend; for what arrangement does the principle of unity of composition *exclude*, if it admits unusual, that is, various arrangements of some organs, accompanied by the total absence of others? Or how does this differ from Cuvier's mode of stating the conclusion, except in the introduction of certain arbitrary hypotheses of developement and stoppage. "I reduce the facts," Cuvier says, "to their true expression, by saying that cephalopods have several organs which are common to them and vertebrates, and which discharge the same offices; but that these organs are in them differently distributed, and often constructed in a different manner; and they are accompanied by several other organs which vertebrates have not; while these on the other hand have several which are wanting in cephalopods."

We shall see afterwards the general principles which Cuvier himself considered as the best guides in these reasonings. But I will first add a few words

on the disposition of the school now under consideration, to reject all assumption of an end.

2. That the parts of the bodies of animals are made in order to discharge their respective offices, is a conviction which we cannot believe to be otherwise than an irremovable principle of the philosophy of organization, when we see the manner in which it has constantly forced itself upon the minds of zoologists and anatomists in all ages; not only as an inference, but as a guide whose indications they could not help following. I have already noticed expressions of this conviction in some of the principal persons who occur in the history of physiology, as Galen and Harvey. I might add many more, but I will content myself with adducing a contemporary of Geoffroy's, whose testimony is the more remarkable, because he obviously shares with his countryman in the common prejudice against the use of final causes. "I consider," he says, in speaking of the provisions for the reproduction of animals[16], "with the great Bacon, the philosophy of final causes as sterile; but I have elsewhere acknowledged that it was very difficult for the most cautious man never to have recourse to them in his explanations." After the survey which we have had to take of the history of physiology, we cannot but see that the assumption of final causes in this branch of science is so far from being sterile, that it has had a large share in every discovery which is included in the

[16] Cabanis, Rapports du Physique et du Morale de l'Homme, i. 299.

existing mass of real knowledge. The use of every organ has been discovered by starting from the assumption that it must have *some* use. The doctrine of the circulation of the blood was, as we have seen, clearly and professedly due to the persuasion of a purpose in the circulatory apparatus. The study of comparative anatomy is the study of the adaptation of animal structures to their purposes. And we shall soon have to show that this conception of final causes has, in our own times, been so far from barren, that it has, in the hands of Cuvier and others, enabled us to become intimately acquainted with vast departments of zoology to which we have no other mode of access. It has placed before us in a complete state, animals, of which, for thousands of years, only a few fragments have existed, and which differ widely from all existing animals; and it has given birth, or at least has given the greatest part of its importance and interest, to a science which forms one of the brightest parts of the modern progress of knowledge. It is, therefore, very far from being a vague and empty assertion, when we say that final causes are a real and indestructible element in zoological philosophy; and that the exclusion of them, as attempted by the school of which we speak, is a fundamental and most mischievous error.

3. Thus, though the physiologist may persuade himself that he ought not to refer to final causes, we find that, practically, he cannot help it; and that the event shows that his practical habit is right

and well-founded. But he may still cling to the speculative difficulties and doubts in which such subjects may be involved by *à priori* considerations. He may say, as Saint-Hilaire does say[17], "I ascribe no intention to God, for I mistrust the feeble powers of my reason. I observe facts merely, and go no further. I only pretend to the character of the historian of *what is*." "I cannot make nature an intelligent being who does nothing in vain, who acts by the shortest mode, who does all for the best."

I am not going to enter at any length into this subject, which, thus considered, is metaphysical and theological, rather than physiological. If any one maintain, as some have maintained, that no manifestation of means apparently used for ends in nature, *can* prove the existence of design in the Author of nature, this is not the place to refute such an opinion in its general form. But I think it may be worth while to show, that even those who incline to such an opinion, still cannot resist the necessity which compels men to assume, in organized beings, the existence of an end.

Among the philosophers who have referred our conviction of the being of God to our moral nature, and have denied the possibility of demonstration on mere physical grounds, Kant is perhaps the most eminent. Yet he has asserted the reality of such a principle of physiology as we are now maintaining in the most emphatic manner. Indeed, this assumption of an end makes his very definition of an orga-

[17] Phil. Zool. p. 10.

nized being. "An organized product of nature is that in which all the parts are mutually ends and means[18]." And this, he says, is a universal and necessary maxim. He adds, "It is well known that the anatomisers of plants and animals, in order to investigate their structure, and to obtain an insight into the grounds why and to what end such parts, why such a situation and connexion of the parts, and exactly such an internal form, come before them, assume, as indispensably necessary, this maxim, that in such a creature nothing is *in vain*, and proceed upon it in the same way in which in general natural philosophy we proceed upon the principle that *nothing happens by chance*. In fact, they can as little free themselves from this teleological principle as from the general physical one; for as, on omitting the latter, no experience would be possible, so on omitting the former principle, no clue could exist for the observation of a kind of natural objects which can be considered teleologically under the conception of natural ends."

Even if the reader should not follow the reasoning of this celebrated philosopher, he will still have no difficulty in seeing that he asserts, in the most distinct manner, that which is denied by the author whom we have before quoted, the propriety and necessity of assuming the existence of an end as our guide in the study of animal organization.

4. It appears to me, therefore, that whether we judge from the arguments, the results, the practice

[18] Urtheilskraft, p. 296.

of physiologists, their speculative opinions, or those of the philosophers of a wider field, we are led to the same conviction, that in the organized world we may and must adopt the belief, that organization exists for its purpose, and that the apprehension of the purpose may guide us in seeing the meaning of the organization. And I now proceed to show how this principle has been brought into additional clearness and use by Cuvier.

In doing this, I may, perhaps, be allowed to make a reflection of a kind somewhat different from the preceding remarks, though suggested by them. In another work[19], I endeavoured to show that those who have been discoverers in science have generally had minds, the disposition of which was to believe in an intelligent Maker of the universe; and that the scientific speculations which produced an opposite tendency, were generally those which, though they might deal familiarly with known physical truths, and conjecture boldly with regard to the unknown, did not add to the number of solid generalisations. In order to judge whether this remark is distinctively applicable in the case now considered, I should have to estimate Cuvier in comparison with other physiologists of his time, which I do not presume to do. But I may observe, that he is allowed by all to have established, on an indestructible basis, many of the most important generalisations which zoology now contains; and the principal defect which

[19] Bridgewater Treatise, B. III. c. vii. and viii. On Inductive Habits of Thought, and on Deductive Habits of Thought.

his critics have pointed out, has been, that he did not generalise still more widely and boldly. It appears, therefore, that he cannot but be placed among the great discoverers in the studies which he pursued; and this being the case, those who look with pleasure on the tendency of the thoughts of the greatest men to an Intelligence far higher than their own, must be gratified to find that he was an example of this tendency; and that the acknowledgement of a creative purpose, as well as a creative power, not only entered into his belief, but made an indispensable and prominent part of his philosophy.

Sect. 3.—Establishment and Application of the Principle of the Conditions of Existence of Animals.—Cuvier.

We have now to describe more in detail the doctrine which Cuvier maintained in opposition to such opinions as we have been speaking of; and which, in his way of applying it, we look upon as a material advance in physiological knowledge, and therefore give to it a distinct place in our history. "Zoology has," he says[21], in the outset of his Règne Animal, "a principle of reasoning which is peculiar to it, and which it employs with advantage on many occasions: this is the principle of *the conditions of existence*, vulgarly called the principle of *final causes*. As nothing can exist if it do not combine all the condi-

[21] Règne An. p. 6.

tions which render its existence possible, the different parts of each being must be co-ordinated in such a manner as to render the total being possible, not only in itself, but in its relations to those which surround it; and the analysis of these conditions often leads to general laws, as clearly demonstrated as those which result from calculation or from experience."

This is enunciation of his leading principle in general terms. To our ascribing it to him, some may object, on the ground of its being self-evident in its nature[21], and having been very anciently applied. But to this we reply, that the principle must be considered as a real discovery, in the hands of him who first shows how to make it an instrument of other discoveries. It is true in other cases well as in this, that some vague apprehension of true general principles, such as *à priori* considerations can supply, has long preceded the knowledge of them as real and verified laws. In such a way it was seen, before Newton, that the motions of the planets must result from attraction; and before Dufay and Franklin, it was held that electrical actions must result from a fluid. Cuvier's merit consisted, not in seeing that an animal cannot exist without combining all the conditions of its existence; but in perceiving that this truth may be taken as a guide in our researches concerning animals;—that the mode of their existence may be collected from one part of their structure, and then

[21] Swainson, Study of Nat. Hist. p. 85.

applied to interpret or detect another part. He went on the supposition not only that animal forms have *some* plan, *some* purpose, but that they have an intelligible plan, a discoverable purpose. He proceeded in his investigations like the decipherer of a manuscript, who makes out his alphabet from one part of the context, and then applies it to read the rest. The proof that his principle was something very different from an identical proposition, is to be found in the fact, that it enabled him to understand and arrange the structures of animals with unprecedented clearness and completeness of order; and to restore the forms of the extinct animals which are found in the rocks of the earth, in a manner which has been universally assented to as irresistibly convincing. These results cannot flow from a trifling or barren principle; and they show us that if we are disposed to form such a judgment of Cuvier's doctrine, it must be because we do not fully apprehend its import.

To illustrate this, we need only quote the statement which he makes, and the uses to which he applies it. Thus in the Introduction to his great great work on "Fossil Remains," he says, "Every organized being forms an entire system of its own, all the parts of which mutually correspond, and concur to produce a certain definite purpose by reciprocal reaction, or by combining to the same end. Hence none of these separate parts can change their forms, without a corresponding change in the other parts of the same animal; and consequently

each of these parts, taken separately, indicates all the other parts to which it has belonged. Thus, if the viscera of an animal are so organized as only to be fitted for the digestion of recent flesh, it is also requisite that the jaws should be so constructed as to fit them for devouring prey; the claws must be constructed for seizing and tearing it in pieces; the teeth for cutting and dividing its flesh; the entire system of the limbs or organs of motion for pursuing and overtaking it; and the organs of sense for discovering it at a distance. Nature must also have endowed the brain of the animal with instincts sufficient for concealing itself, and for laying plans to catch its necessary victims[22]." By such considerations he has been able to reconstruct the whole of many animals of which parts only were given;—a positive result, which shows both the reality and the value of the truth on which he wrought.

Another great example, equally showing the immense importance of this principle in Cuvier's hands, is the reform which, by means of it, he introduced into the classification of animals. Here again we may quote the view he himself has given[23] of the character of his own improvements. In studying the physiology of the natural classes of vertebrate animals, he found, he says, "in the respective quantity of their respiration, the reason of the quantity of their motion, and consequently of the kind of

[22] Theory of the Earth, p. 90.

[23] Hist. Sc. Nat. i. 293.

locomotion. This, again, furnishes the reason for the forms of their skeletons and muscles; and the energy of their senses, and the force of their digestion, are in a necessary proportion to the same quantity. Thus a division which had till then been established, like that of vegetables, only upon observation, was found to rest upon causes appreciable, and applicable to other cases." Accordingly, he applied this view to invertebrates;—examined the modifications which take place in their organs of circulation, respiration, and sensation; and having calculated the necessary results of these modifications, he deduced from it a new division of those animals, in which they are arranged according to their true relations.

Such have been some of the results of the principle of the conditions of existence, as applied by its great assertor.

It is clear, indeed, that such a principle could acquire its practical value only in the hands of a person intimately acquainted with anatomical details, with the functions of the organs, and with their variety in different animals. It is only by means of such nutriment that the embryo truth could be developed into a vast tree of science. But it is not the less clear, that Cuvier's immense knowledge and great powers of thought led to their results, only by being employed under the guidance of this master-principle: and, therefore, we may justly consider it as the distinctive feature of his speculations, and follow it with a gratified eye, as the thread of gold which

runs through, connects, and enriches his zoological researches:—gives them a deeper interest and a higher value than can belong to any view of the organical sciences, in which the very essence of organization is kept out of view.

The real philosopher, who knows that all the kinds of truth are intimately connected, and that all the best hopes and encouragements which are granted to our nature must be consistent with truth, will be satisfied and confirmed, rather than surprised and disturbed, thus to find the natural sciences leading him to the borders of a higher region. To him it will appear natural and reasonable, that, after journeying so long among the beautiful and orderly laws by which the universe is governed, we find ourselves at last approaching to a source of order and law, and intellectual beauty:—that, after venturing into the region of life and feeling and will, we are led to believe the fountain of life and will, not to be itself unintelligent and dead, but to be a living mind, a power which aims as well as acts. To us this doctrine appears like the natural cadence of the tones to which we have so long been listening; and without such a final strain our ears would have been left craving and unsatisfied. We have been lingering long amid the harmonies of law and symmetry, constancy and developement; and these notes, though their music was sweet and deep, must too often have sounded to the ear of our moral nature, as vague and unmeaning melodies, floating in the air around us, but conveying no definite thought,

moulded into no intelligible announcement. But one passage which we have again and again caught by snatches, though sometimes interrupted and lost, at last swells in our ears full, clear, and decided; and the religious "Hymn in honour of the Creator," to which Galen so gladly lent his voice, and in which the best physiologists of succeeding times have ever joined, is filled into a richer and deeper harmony by the greatest philosophers of these later days, and will roll on hereafter, the "perpetual song" of the temple of science.

BOOK XVIII.

THE PALÆTIOLOGICAL SCIENCES.

HISTORY OF GEOLOGY.

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acts.

dence

Di quibus imperium est animarum, Umbræque silentes,
Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia late,
Sit mihi fas audita loqui; sit, numine vestro
Pandere res alta terrâ et caligine mersas.

VIRGIL, *Æn.* vi. 264.

Ye Mighty Ones, who sway the Souls that go
Amid the marvels of the world below!
Ye, silent Shades, who sit and hear around!
Chaos! and Streams that burn beneath the ground!
All, all forgive, if by your converse stirred,
My lips shall utter what my ears have heard;
If I shall speak of things of doubtful birth,
Deep sunk in darkness, as deep sunk in earth.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the Palætiological Sciences.

We now approach the last class of sciences which enter into the design of the present work; and of these, Geology is the representative, whose history we shall therefore briefly follow. By the class of sciences to which I have referred it, I mean to point out those researches in which the object is, to ascend from the present state of things to a more ancient condition, from which the present is derived by intelligible causes.

The sciences which treat of causes have sometimes been termed *ætiological*, from *αἰτία, a cause:* but this term would not sufficiently describe the speculations of which we now speak; since it might include sciences which treat of permanent causality, like mechanics, as well as inquiries concerning progressive causation. The investigations which we now wish to group together, deal, not only with the possible, but with the actual past; and a portion of that science on which we are about to enter, geology, has properly been termed *palæontology*, since it treats of beings which formerly existed[1]. Hence, combining these two notions[2], the term *palætiology* appears to be not inappropriate, to describe those

[1] Πάλαι, ὄντα.

[2] Πάλαι, αἰτία.

speculations which thus refer to actual past events, but attempt to explain them by laws of causation.

Such speculations are not confined to the world of inert matter; we have examples of them in inquiries concerning the monuments of the art and labour of distant ages; in examinations into the origin and early progress of states and cities, customs, and languages; as well as in researches concerning the causes and formations of mountains and rocks, the imbedding of fossils in strata, and their elevation from the bottom of the ocean. All these speculations are connected by this bond,—that they endeavour to ascend to a past state of things, by the aid of the evidence of the present. In asserting, with Cuvier, that "The geologist is an antiquary of a new order," we do not mark a fanciful and superficial resemblance of employment merely, but a real and philosophical connexion of the principles of investigation. The organic fossils which occur in the rock, and the medals which we find in the ruins of ancient cities, are to be studied in a similar spirit and for a similar purpose. Indeed, it is not always easy to know where the task of the geologist ends, and that of the antiquary begins. The study of ancient geography may involve us in the examination of the causes by which the forms of coasts and plains is changed; the ancient mound or scarped rock may force upon us the problem, whether its form is the work of nature or of man; the ruined temple may exhibit the traces of time in its changed level, and sea-worn columns; and thus the

antiquarian of the earth may be brought into the very middle of the domain belonging to the antiquarian of art.

Such a union of these different kinds of archæological investigations has, in fact, repeatedly occurred. The changes which have taken place in the temple of Jupiter Serapis, near Puzzuoli, are of the sort which have just been described; and this is only one example of a large class of objects;—the monuments of art converted into records of natural events. And on a wider scale, we find Cuvier, in his inquiries into geological changes, bringing together historical and physical evidence. Dr. Prichard, in his "Researches into the Physical History of Man," has shown that to execute such a design as his, we must combine the knowledge of the physiological laws of nature with the traditions of history and the philosophical comparison of languages. And even if we refuse to admit, as part of the business of geology, inquiries concerning the origin and physical history of the *present* population of the globe; still the geologist is compelled to take an interest in such inquiries, in order to understand matters which rigorously belong to his proper domain; for the ascertained history of the present state of things offers the best means of throwing light upon the causes of *past* changes. Mr. Lyell quotes Dr. Prichard's books more frequently than any geological work of the same extent.

Again, we may notice another common circumstance in the studies which we are grouping together

as palætiological, diverse as they are in their subjects. In all of them we have the same kind of manifestations of a number of successive changes, each springing out of a preceding state; and in all, the phenomena at each step become more and more complicated, by involving the results of all that has preceded, modified by supervening agencies. The general aspect of all these trains of change is similar, and offers the same features for description. The relics and ruins of the earlier states are preserved, mutilated and dead, in the products of later times. The analogical figures by which we are tempted to express this relation are philosophically just. It is more than a mere fanciful description, to say that in languages, customs, forms of society, political institutions, we see a number of formations superimposed upon one another, each of which is, for the most part, an assemblage of fragments and results of the preceding condition. Though our comparison might be bold, it would be just, if we were to say, that the English language is a conglomerate of Latin words, bound together in a Saxon cement; the fragments of the Latin being partly portions introduced directly from the parent quarry, with all their sharp edges, and partly pebbles of the same material, obscured and shaped by long rolling in a Norman or some other channel. Thus the study of palætiology in the materials of the earth, is only a type of similar studies with respect to all the elements, which, in the history of the earth's inhabitants, have been constantly undergoing a series of connected changes.

But, wide as is the view which such considerations give us of the class of sciences to which geology belongs, they extend still further. "The science of the changes which have taken place in the organic and inorganic kingdoms of nature," (such is the description which has been given of geology,[3]) may, by following another set of connexions, be extended beyond "the modifications of the surface of our own planet." For we cannot doubt but that some resemblance, of a closer or looser kind, has obtained between the changes and causes of change, on other bodies of the universe, and on our own. The appearances of something of the kind of volcanic action on the surface of the moon, are not to be mistaken. And the inquiries concerning the origin of our planet and of our solar system, inquiries to which Geology irresistibly impels her students, direct us to ask what information the rest of the universe can supply, bearing upon this subject. It has been thought by some, that we can trace systems, more or less like our solar system, in the process of formation; the nebulous matter, which is, at first, expansive and attenuated, condensing gradually into suns and planets. Whether this *Nebular Hypothesis* be tenable or no, I shall not here inquire; but the discussion of such a question would be closely connected with geology, both in its interests and in its methods. We shall have to class cosmical Palætiology with terrestrial, if we ever find materials for the former science.

[3] Lyell, p. i.

These palætiological sciences might properly be called *historical*, if the term were sufficiently precise: for they are all of the nature of history, being concerned with the succession of events; and the part of history which deals with the past causes of events, is, in fact, a moral palætiology. But the phrase *natural history* has so accustomed us to a use of the word *historical* in which we have nothing to do with time, that it would be in constant danger of being misunderstood. The fact is, as Mohs has said, that Natural History, when systematically treated, rigorously excludes all that is historical; for it classes objects by their permanent and universal properties; and has nothing to do with the narration of particular and casual facts. And this is an inconsistency which we shall not attempt to rectify.

All palætiological sciences, since they undertake to refer changes to their causes, assume a certain classification of the phenomena which change brings forth, and a knowledge of the operation of the causes of change. These phenomena, these causes, are very different, in the branches of knowledge which I have thus classed together. The natural features of the earth's surface, the works of art, the institutions of society, the forms of language, taken together, are undoubtedly a very wide collection of subjects of speculation; and the kinds of causation which apply to them are no less varied. Of the causes of change in the inorganic and organic world,—the peculiar principles of geology,—we shall hereafter have to speak. As these must be studied by the geologist,

so, in like manner, the tendencies, instincts, faculties, principles, which direct man to architecture and sculpture, to civil government, to rational and grammatical speech, and which have determined the circumstances of his progress in these paths, must be in a great degree known to the palætiologist of art, of society, and of language, respectively, in order that he may speculate soundly upon his peculiar subject. With these matters we shall not here meddle, confining ourselves, in our exemplification of the conditions and progress of such sciences, to the case of geology.

The journey of survey which we have attempted to perform over the field of human knowledge, although carefully directed according to the paths and divisions of the physical sciences, has already conducted us to the boundaries of physical science, and gives us a glimpse of the region beyond. In following the history of life, we found ourselves led to notice the perceptive and active faculties of man; it appeared that there was a ready passage from physiology to psychology, from physics to metaphysics. In the class of sciences now under notice, we are, at a different point, carried from the world of matter to the world of thought and feeling,—from things to men. For, as we have already said, the science of the causes of change includes the productions of man as well as of nature. The history of the earth, and the history of the earth's inhabitants, as collected from phenomena, are governed by the same principles. Thus the portions of knowledge which seek

to travel back towards the origin, whether of inert things or of the works of man, resemble each other. Both of them treat of events as connected by the thread of time and causation. In both we endeavour to learn accurately what the present is, and hence what the past has been. Both are historical sciences in the same sense.

It must be recollected that I am now speaking of history as ætiological;—as it investigates causes, and as it does this in a scientific, that is, in a rigorous and systematic, manner. And I may observe here, though I cannot here dwell on the subject, that all ætiological sciences will consist of three portions; the description of the facts and phenomena;—the general theory of the causes of change appropriate to the case;—and the application of the theory to the facts. Thus, taking geology for our example, we must have, first, *Descriptive* or *Phenomenal Geology;* next, the exposition of the general principles by which such phenomena can be produced, which we may term *Geological Dynamics;* and, lastly, doctrines hence derived, as to what have been the causes of the existing state of things, which we may call *Physical Geology.*

These three branches of geology may be found frequently or constantly combined in the works of writers on the subject, and it may not always be easy to discriminate exactly what belongs to each subject[4].

[4] The Wernerians, in distinguishing their study from *geology*, and designating it as *geognosy*, the knowledge of the earth, appear to have intended to select Descriptive Geology for their

But the analogy of this science with others, its present condition and future fortunes, will derive great illustration from such a distribution of its history; and in this point of view, therefore, we shall briefly treat of it; dividing the history of Geological Dynamics, for the sake of convenience, into two chapters, one referring to inorganic, and one to organic, phenomena.

peculiar field. In like manner, the original aim of the Geological Society of London, which was formed (1807) "with a view to record and multiply observations," recognised the possibility of a Descriptive Geology separate from the other portions of the science.

DESCRIPTIVE GEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

PRELUDE TO SYSTEMATIC DESCRIPTIVE GEOLOGY.

Sect. 1.—*Ancient Notices of Geological Facts.*

THE recent history of geology, as to its most important points, is bound up with what is doing at present from day to day; and that portion of the history of the science which belongs to the past, has been amply treated by other writers[1]. I shall, therefore, pass rapidly over the series of events of which this history consists; and shall only attempt to mention what may seem to illustrate and confirm my own view of its state and principles.

As I have said, I shall notice, in the first place, phenomenal geology, or the description of the facts, as distinct from the inquiry into their causes. It is manifest that such a merely descriptive kind of knowledge may exist; and it probably will not be contested, that such knowledge ought to be collected, before we attempt to frame theories concerning the causes of the phenomena. But it must be observed, that we are here speaking of the formation of a *science;*

[1] As Lyell, Fitton, Conybeare, in our own country.

and that it is not a collection of miscellaneous, unconnected, unarranged knowledge that can be considered as constituting such a science; but a methodical, coherent, and, as far as possible, complete body of facts, exhibiting fully the condition of the earth, as regards those circumstances which are the subject-matter of geological speculation. Such a descriptive geology is a pre-requisite to physical geology, just as phenomenal astronomy necessarily preceded physical astronomy, or as classificatory Botany is a necessary accompaniment to Botanical Physiology. We may observe also that descriptive geology, such as we now speak of, is one of the classificatory sciences, like mineralogy or botany; and will be found to exhibit some of the features of that class of sciences.

Since then, our History of Descriptive Geology is to include only systematic and scientific descriptions of the earth or portions of it, we pass over, at once, all the casual and insulated statements of facts, though they may be geological facts, which occur in early writers; such, for instance, as the remark of Herodotus[2], that there are shells in the mountains of Egypt; or the general statements which Ovid puts in the mouth of Pythagoras[3].

> Vidi ego quod fuerat solidissima tellus,
> Esse fretum; vidi factas ex æquore terras,
> Et procul a pelago conchæ jacuere marinæ.

We may remark here already how generally there

[2] ii. 12. [3] Met. xv. 262.

are mingled with descriptive notices of such geological facts, speculations concerning their causes. Herodotus refers to the circumstance just quoted, for the purpose of showing that Egypt was formerly a gulf of the sea; and the passage of the Roman poet is part of a series of exemplifications which he gives of the philosophical tenet, that nothing perishes but everything changes. It will be only by constant attention that we shall be able to keep our provinces of geology distinct.

Sect. 2.—*Early Descriptions and Collections of Fossils.*

If we look, as we have proposed to do, for systematic and exact knowledge of geological facts, we find nothing which we can properly adduce till we come to modern times. But when facts such as those already mentioned, (that sea-shells and other marine objects are found imbedded in rocks,) and other circumstances in the structure of the earth, had attracted considerable attention, the exact examination, collection, and record of these circumstances began to be attempted. Among such steps in descriptive geology, we may notice descriptions and pictures of fossils, descriptions of veins and mines, collections of organic and inorganic fossils, maps of the mineral structure of countries, and finally, the discoveries concerning the superposition of strata, the constancy of their organic contents, their correspondence in different countries, and such

great general relations of the materials and features of the earth as have been discovered up to the present time. Without attempting to assign to each important advance its author, I shall briefly exemplify each of the modes of contributing to descriptive geology which I have just enumerated.

The study of organic fossils was first pursued with connexion and system in Italy. The hills which on each side skirt the mountain-range of the Apennines are singularly rich in marine remains. When these drew attention, they soon gave rise to controversies, whether they really were the remains of living creatures, or the productions of some capricious or mysterious power by which the forms of such creatures were mimicked; and again, if the shells were really the spoils of the sea, whether they had been carried to the hills by the deluge of which the Scripture speaks, or whether they indicated revolutions of the earth of a different kind. The earlier works which contain the descriptions of the phenomena have, in almost all instances, by far the greater part of their pages occupied with these speculations; indeed, the facts could not be studied without leading to such inferences, and would not have been collected but for the interest which such reasonings possessed. As one of the first persons who applied a sound and vigorous intellect to these subjects, we may notice the celebrated painter Leonardo da Vinci, whom we have already had to refer to as one of the founders of the modern mechanical sciences. He strenuously asserts the contents of the rocks to be

real shells, and maintains the reality of the changes of the domain of land and sea which these spoils of the ocean imply. "You will tell me," he says, "that nature and the influence of the stars have formed these shelly forms in the mountains; then show me a place in the mountains where the stars at the present day make shelly forms of different ages, and of different species in the same place. And how, with that, will you explain the gravel which is hardened in stages at different heights in the mountains." He then mentions several other particulars respecting these evidences that the existing mountains were formerly the bed of the sea. Leonardo died in 1519. At present, we refer to such works only so far as they are descriptive. Going onwards with this view, we may notice Fracastoro, who wrote concerning the petrifactions which were brought to light in the mountains of Verona, when, in 1517, they were excavated for the purpose of repairing the city. Little was done in the way of collection of facts for some time after this. In 1669, Steno, a Dane resident in Italy, put forth his treatise, *De Solido intra Solidum naturaliter contento;* and the following year, Augustino Scilla, a Sicilian painter, published a Latin epistle, *De Corporibus Marinis Lapidescentibus*, illustrated by good engravings of fossil-shells, teeth, and corals. After another interval of speculative controversy, we come to Antonio Vallisneri, whose letters, *De' Corpi Marini che su' Monti si trovano*, appeared at Venice in 1721. In these letters he describes the fossils of Monte

Bolea, and attempts to trace the extent of the marine deposits of Italy[4], and to distinguish the most important of the fossils. Similar descriptions and figures were published with reference to our own country at a later period. In 1766, Brander's *Fossilia Hantoniensia*, or Hampshire Fossils, appeared; containing excellent figures of fossil shells from the south coast of England; and similar works came forth in other parts of Europe.

However exact might be the descriptions and figures thus produced, they could not give such complete information as the objects themselves, collected and permanently preserved in museums. Vallisneri says[5], that having begun to collect fossils for the purpose of forming a grotto, he selected the best, and preserved them "as a noble diversion for the more curious." The museum of Calceolarius at Verona contained a celebrated collection of such remains. A copious description of it appeared in 1622. Such collections had been made from an earlier period, and catalogues of them published. Thus Gessner's work, *De Rerum Fossilium, Lapidum et Gemmarum Figuris*, (1565,) contains a catalogue of the cabinet of petrifactions collected by John Kentman; many catalogues of the same kind appeared in the seventeenth century[6]. Lhwyd's *Lithophylacii Britannici Iconographia*, published at Oxford in 1669, and exhibiting a very ample catalogue of

[4] p. 20. [5] p. 1.

[6] Parkinson, Organic Remains, vol. i. p. 20.

English fossils contained in the Ashmolean Museum, may be noticed as one of these.

One of the most remarkable occurrences in the progress of descriptive geology in England, was the formation of a geological museum by William Woodward as early as 1695. This collection, formed with great labour, systematically arranged, and carefully catalogued, he bequeathed to the University of Cambridge; founding and endowing at the same time a professorship of the study of geology. The Woodwardian Museum still subsists, a monument of the sagacity with which its author so early saw the importance of such a collection.

Collections and descriptions of fossils, including in the term specimens of minerals of all kinds, as well as organic remains, were frequently made, and especially where mining was cultivated; but under such circumstances, they scarcely tended at all to that general and complete knowledge of the earth of which we are now tracing the progress.

In more modern times, collections may be said to be the most important books of the geologist, at least next to the strata themselves. The identifications and arrangements of our best geologists, the immense studies of fossil anatomy by Cuvier and others, have been conducted mainly by means of collections of specimens. They are more important in this study than in botany, because specimens which contain important geological information are both more rare and more permanent. Plants, though each individual is perishable, perpetuate and

diffuse their kind; while the organic impression on a stone, if lost, may never occur in a second instance; but, on the other hand, if it be preserved in the museum, the individual is almost as permanent in this case, as the species in the other.

I shall proceed to notice another mode in which such information was conveyed.

Sect. 3.—*First Construction of Geological Maps.*

Dr. Lister, a learned physician, sent to the Royal Society, in 1683, a proposal for maps of soils or minerals; in which he suggested that in the map of England, for example, each soil and its boundaries might be distinguished by colour, or in some other way. Such a mode of expressing and connecting our knowledge of the materials of the earth, was, perhaps, obvious, when the mass of knowledge became considerable. In 1720, Fontenelle, in his observations on a paper of De Reaumur's, which contained an account of a deposit of fossil-shells in Touraine, says, that in order to reason on such cases, "we must have a kind of geographical charts, constructed according to the collections of shells found in the earth." But, as he justly adds, "What a quantity of observations, and what time, would it not require to form such maps!"

The execution of such projects required, not merely great labour, but several steps in generalisation and classification, before it could take place. Still such attempts were made. In 1743, was pub-

lished, "A new Philosophico-chorographical Chart of East Kent, invented and delineated by Christopher Packe, M.D.;" in which, however, the main object is rather to express the course of the valleys than the materials of the country. Guettard formed the project of a mineralogical map of France, and Monnet carried this scheme into effect in 1780[7], "by order of the king." In these maps, however, the country is not considered as divided into soils, still less strata; but each part is marked with its predominant mineral only. The spirit of generalisation which constitutes the main value of such a work is wanting.

Geological maps belong strictly to descriptive geology; they are free from those wide and doubtful speculations which form so large a portion of the earlier geological books. Yet even geological maps cannot be usefully or consistently constructed without considerable steps of classification and generalisation. When, in our own time, geologists were become weary of controversies respecting theory, they applied themselves with extraordinary zeal to the construction of stratigraphical maps of various countries; flattering themselves that in this way they were merely recording incontestable facts and differences. Nor do I mean to intimate that their facts were doubtful, or their distinctions arbitrary. But still they were facts interpreted, associated, and

[7] Atlas et Description Minéralogique de la France, entrepris par ordre du Roi; par MM. Guettard et Monnet, Paris, 1780, pp. 212, with 31 maps.

represented, by means of the classifications and general laws which earlier geologists had established; and thus even descriptive geology has been brought into existence as a science by the formation of systems and the discovery of principles. At this we cannot be surprised, when we recollect the many steps which the formation of classificatory botany required. We must now notice some of the principal discoveries which tended to the formation of Systematic Descriptive Geology.

CHAPTER II.

Formation of Systematic Descriptive Geology.

Sect. 1.—*Discovery of the Order and Stratification of the Materials of the Earth.*

That the substances of which the earth is framed are not scattered and mixed at random, but possess identity and continuity to a considerable extent, Lister was aware, when he proposed his map. But there is, in his suggestions, nothing relating to stratification; nor any order of position, still less of time, assigned to these materials. Woodward, however, appears to have been fully aware of the general law of stratification. On collecting information from all parts, "the result was," he says, "that in time I was abundantly assured that the circumstances of these things in remoter countries were much the same with those of ours here: that the stone, and other terrestrial matter, in France, Flanders, Holland, Spain, Italy, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, was distinguished into *strata or layers*, as it is in England; that these strata were divided by parallel fissures; that there were enclosed in the stone and all the other denser kinds of terrestrial matter, great numbers of the shells, and other productions of the

sea, in the same manner as in that of this island[1]." So important a truth, thus collected from a copious collection of particulars by a patient induction, was an important step in the science.

These general facts now began to be commonly recognised, and followed into detail. Stukeley the antiquary[2] (1724), remarked an important feature in the strata of England, that their *escarpments*, or steepest sides, are turned towards the west and north-west; and Strachey[3] (1719), gave a stratigraphical description of certain coal-mines near Bath[4]. Michell, appointed Woodwardian Professor at Cambridge in 1762, described this stratified structure of the earth far more distinctly than his predecessors, and pointed out, as the consequence of it, that "the same kinds of earths, stones, and minerals, will appear at the surface of the earth in long parallel slips, parallel to the long ridges of mountains; and so, in fact, we find them[5]."

Michell (as appeared by papers of his which were examined after his death) had made himself acquainted with the series of English strata which thus occur from Cambridge to York;—that is, from the chalk to the coal. These relations of position required that geological maps, to complete the information they conveyed, should be accompanied by geological *Sections*, or imaginary representations of

[1] Natural History of the Earth, 1723.

[2] Itinerarium Curiosum, 1724.

[3] Phil. Tran. 1719, and Observations on Strata, &c. 1729.

[4] Fitton, Annals of Philosophy, N. S. vol. i. and ii. (1832, 3), p. 157.

[5] Phil. Tran. 1760.

the order and mode of superpositions, as well as of the superficial extent of the strata, as in more recent times has usually been done. The strata, as we travel from the higher to the lower, come from under each other into view; and this *outcropping*, *basseting*, or by whatever other term it is described, is an important feature in their description.

These relations of position were noticed to be combined with other important facts, which irresistibly suggested the notion of a relation in time. This, indeed, was implied in all theories of the earth; but observations of the facts most require our notice. Steno is asserted by Humboldt[6] to be the first who (in 1369) distinguished between rocks anterior to the existence of plants and animals upon the globe, containing therefore no organic remains; and rocks superimposed on these, and full of such remains (turbidi maris sedimenta sibi invicem imposita).

Rouelle is stated, by his pupil Desmarest, to have made some additional and important observations. "He saw," it is said, "that the shells which occur in rocks were not the same in all countries; that certain species occur together, while others do not occur in the same beds; that there is a constant order in the arrangement of these shells, certain species lying in distinct bands[7]."

Such divisions as these required to be marked by technical names. A distinction was made of

[6] Essai Géognostique.

[7] Encycl. Méthod. Geogr. Phys. tom. i. p. 416, as quoted by Fitton, p. 159.

l'ancienne and *la nouvelle terre*, to which Rouelle added a *travaille intermediaire*. Rouelle died in 1770, having been known by lectures, not by books. Lehman, in 1756, claims for himself the credit of being the first to observe and describe correctly the structure of stratified countries; being ignorant, probably, of the labours of Strachey in England. He divided mountains into three classes[8]; *primitive*, which were formed with the world;—those which resulted from a partial destruction of the primitive rocks;—and a third class resulting from local or universal deluges. In 1759, also, Arduino[9], in his Memoirs on the mountains of Padua, Vicenza, and Verona, deduced, from original observations, the distinction of rocks into primary, secondary, and tertiary.

The relations of position and fossils were, from this period, inseparably connected with opinions concerning succession in time. Odoardi remarked[10], that the strata of the Subapennine hills are *unconformable* to those of the Apennine, (as Strachey had observed, that the strata above the coal were unconformable to the coal[11];) and his work contained a clear argument respecting the different ages of these two classes of hills. Fuchsel was, in 1762, aware of the distinctness of strata of different ages in Germany. Pallas and Saussure followed general views of the same kind in their observations: but, perhaps, the general circulation of such notions was most due to Werner.

[8] Lyell, i. 70. [9] Ib. 72. [10] Ib. 74.
[11] Fitton, 157.

Sect. 2.—Systematic Form given to Descriptive Geology.—Werner.

WERNER expressed the general relations of the strata of the earth by means of classifications which, so far as general applicability is concerned, are extremely imperfect and arbitrary; he promulgated a theory which almost entirely neglected all the facts which had already been discovered respecting the grouping of fossils,—which was founded upon observations made in a very limited district of Germany,—and which was contradicted even by the facts of this district. Yet the acuteness of his discrimination in the subjects which he studied, the generality of the tenets he asserted, and the charm which he threw about his speculations, gave to geology, or, as he termed it, *geognosy*, a popularity and reputation which it had never before possessed. His system asserted certain universal formations, which followed each other in a constant order;—granite the lowest,—then mica-slate and clay-slate;—upon these *primitive* rocks, generally highly inclined, rest other *transition* strata;—upon these, lie *secondary* ones, which being more nearly horizontal, are called *flötz* or flat. The term *formation*, which we have thus introduced, indicating groups which, by evidence of all kinds,—of their materials, their position, and their organic contents,—are judged to belong to the same period, implies no small amount of theory: yet this term, from this time forth, is to be looked upon as a term of clas-

sification solely, so far as classification can be separately attended to.

Werner's distinctions of strata were for the most part drawn from mineralogical constitution. Doubtless, he could not fail to perceive the great importance of organic fossils. "I was witness," says Humboldt, one of his most philosophical followers, "of the lively satisfaction which he felt when, in 1792, M. De Schlotheim, one of the most distinguished geologists of the school of Freiberg, began to make the relations of fossils to strata the principal object of his studies." But Werner and the disciples of his school, even the most enlightened of them, never employed the characters derived from organic remains with the same boldness and perseverance as those who had from the first considered them as the leading phenomena: thus Humboldt, in 1823, says, "Are we justified in concluding that all formations are characterised by particular species? that the fossil-shells of the chalk, the muschelkalk, the Jura limestone, and the Alpine limestone, are all different? I think this would be pushing the induction much too far[12]." In Jameson's "Geognosy," which may be taken as a representation of the Wernerian doctrines, organic fossils are in no instance referred to as characters of formations or strata. After the curious and important evidence, contained in organic fossils, which had been brought into view by the labours of Italian, English, and German writers, the promulgation of a

[12] Gissement des Roches, p. 41.

system of descriptive geology, in which all this evidence was neglected, cannot be considered otherwise than as a retrograde step in science.

Werner maintained the aqueous deposition of all strata above the primitive rocks; even of those *trap* rocks, to which, from their resemblance to lava and other phenomena, Raspe, Arduino, and others had already assigned a volcanic origin. The fierce and long controversy between the *Vulcanists* and *Neptunists*, which this dogma excited, does not belong to this part of our history; but the discovery of veins of granite penetrating the superincumbent slate, to which it led, was an important event in descriptive geology. Hutton, the author of the theory of igneous causation which was in this country opposed to that of Werner, sought and found this phenomenon in the Grampian hills, in 1785. This supposed verification of his system "filled him with delight, and called forth such marks of joy and exultation, that the guides who accompanied him were persuaded, says his biographer[13], that he must have discovered a vein of silver or gold[14]."

Desmarest's examination of Auvergne (1768), showed that there was there an instance of a country which could not be described without terms implying that the basalt, which covered so large a portion of it, had flowed from the craters of extinct volcanoes. His map of Auvergne was an excellent example of such a survey, executed in a

[13] Playfair's Works, vol. iv. p. 75. [14] Lyell, i. 90.

case quite different from those of common stratified countries[15].

The facts connected with metalliferous veins are valuable to the geologist as well as to the miner, although even yet much difficulty attends all attempts to theorize concerning them. The facts of this nature have been collected in great abundance in all mining districts; and form a prominent part of the descriptive geology of such districts; as, for example, the Hartz, and Cornwall.

Without further pursuing the history of the knowledge of the inorganic phenomena of the earth, I turn to a still richer department of geology, which is concerned with organic fossils.

Sect. 3.—*Application of Organic Remains as a Geological Character.—Smith.*

Rouelle and Odoardi had perceived, as we have seen, that fossils were grouped in bands: but from this general observation to the execution of a survey of a large kingdom, founded upon this principle, would have been a vast stride, even if the author of it had been aware of the doctrines thus asserted by these writers. In fact, however, William Smith executed such a survey of England, with no other guide or help than his own sagacity and perseverance. In his employments as a civil engineer, he noticed the remarkable continuity and constant order of the strata in the neighbourhood of Bath, as discriminated by their fossils; and about the year

[15] Lyell, i. 86.

1793, he[16] drew up a Tabular View of the strata of that district, which contained the germ of his subsequent discoveries. Finding in the north of England the same strata and associations of strata with which he had become acquainted in the west, he was led to name them and to represent them by means of maps, according to their occurrence over the whole face of England. These maps appeared[17] in 1815; and a work by the same author, entitled "The English Strata identified by Organic Remains," came forth later. But the views on which this identification of strata rests, belong to a considerably earlier date; and had not only been acted upon, but freely imparted in conversation many years before.

In the mean time the study of fossils was pursued with zeal in various countries. Lamarck and Defrance employed themselves in determining the fossil-shells of the neighbourhood of Paris[18]; and the interest inspired by this subject was strongly nourished and stimulated by the memorable work of Cuvier and Brogniart, "On the Environs of Paris," published in 1811, and by Cuvier's subsequent researches on the subjects thus brought under notice. For now, not only the successive definition and arrangement, but many other relations among fossil strata, irresistibly arrested the attention of the philosopher. Brogniart[19] showed that very striking resemblances

[16] Fitton, p. 148.

[17] Brit. Asso. 1832. Conybeare, p. 373.

[18] Humboldt, Giss. d. R. p. 35.

[19] Hist. Nat. des Crustacés Fossiles, p. 57, 62.

occurred in their fossil remains, between certain strata of Europe and of North America; and proved that a rock may be so much disguised, that the identity of the stratum can only be recognised by geological characters[20].

The Italian geologists had found in their mountains, for the most part, the same species of shells which existed in their seas; but the German and English writers, as Gesner[21], Raspe[22], and Brander[23], had perceived that the fossil-shells were either of unknown species, or of such as lived in distant latitudes. To decide that the animals and plants, of which we find the remains in a fossil state, were of species now extinct, obviously required an exact and extensive knowledge of natural history. And if this were so, to assign the relations of the past to the existing tribes of beings, and the peculiarities of their vital processes and habits, were tasks which could not be performed without the most consummate physiological skill and talent. Such tasks, however, have been the familiar employments of geologists, and naturalists incited and appealed to by geologists, ever since Cuvier published his examination of the fossil inhabitants of the Paris basin. Without attempting a history of such labours, I may notice a few circumstances connected with them.

[20] Humboldt Giss. d. R. p. 45.

[21] Lyell, i. 70. [22] Ib. 74. [23] Ib. 76.

Sect. 4.—Advances in Palæontology.—Cuvier.

So long as the organic fossils which were found in the strata of the earth were marine animals, it was very difficult for geologists to be assured, that they were such as did not exist in any part or clime of the existing ocean. But when large land and river animals were discovered, different from any known species, the persuasion that they were of extinct races was forced upon the naturalist. Yet this opinion was not taken up slightly, nor acquiesced in without many struggles.

Bones which had been supposed to belong to fossil elephants, were some of the first with regard to which this conclusion was established. Such remains occur in vast numbers in the soil and gravel of almost every part of the world; especially in Siberia, where they are called the bones of the *mammoth*. They had been noticed by the ancients, as we learn from Pliny[24]; and had been ascribed to human giants, to elephants imported by the Romans, and to many other origins. But in 1796, Cuvier had examined these opinions with a more profound knowledge than his predecessors; and he thus stated the result of his researches[25]. "With regard to what have been called the fossil remains of elephants, from Tentzelius to Pallas, I believe that I am in a condition to prove, that they belong to animals

[24] Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi. 18.

[25] Mém. Inst. Math. et Phys. tom. ii. p. 4.

which were very clearly specifically different from our existing elephants, although they resembled them sufficiently to be considered as belonging to the same genera." He had founded this conclusion principally on the structure of the teeth, which he found to differ in the Asiatic and African elephant; while, in the fossil animal, it was different from both. But he also reasoned in part on the form of the skull, of which the best-known example had been described in the Philosophical Transactions as early as 1737[26]. "As soon," says Cuvier[27] at a later period, "as I became acquainted with Messerschmidt's drawing, and joined to the differences which it presented, those which I had myself observed in the inferior jaw and the molar teeth, I no longer doubted that the fossil elephants were of a species different from the Indian elephant. This idea, which I announced to the Institute in the month of January, 1796, opened to me views entirely new respecting the theory of the earth; and determined me to devote myself to the long researches and to the assiduous labours which have now occupied me for twenty-five years."

We have here, then, the starting-point of those researches concerning extinct animals, which, ever since that time, have attracted so large a share of notice from geologists and from the world. Cuvier could hardly have anticipated the vast storehouse of

[26] Described by Breyne from a specimen found in Siberia by Messerschmidt in 1722. Phil. Tr. xl. 446.

[27] Ossemens Fossiles, second edit. i. 178.

materials which lay under his feet, ready to supply him occupation of the most intense interest in the career on which he had thus entered. The examination of the strata on which Paris stands, and of which its buildings consist, supplied him with animals, not only different from existing ones, but some of them of great size and curious peculiarities. A careful examination of the remains which these strata contain was undertaken soon after the period we have referred to. In 1802, Defrance had collected several hundreds of undescribed species of shells; and Lamarck[28] began a series of Memoirs upon them; remodelling the whole of conchology, in order that they might be included in its classifications. And two years afterwards (1804) appears the first of Cuvier's grand series of Memoirs containing the restoration of the vertebrate animals of these strata. In this vast natural museum, and in contributions from other parts of the globe, he discovered the most extraordinary creatures:—the palæotherium[29], which is intermediate between the horse and the pig; the anoplotherium, which stands nearest to the rhinoceros and the tapir; the megalonix and megatherium, animals of the sloth tribe, but of the size of the ox and the rhinoceros. The Memoirs which contained these and many other discoveries, set the naturalists to work in every part of Europe.

Another very curious class of animals was brought to light by the geologists of England principally;

[28] Annales du Muséum d'Hist. Nat. tom. i. p. 308, and the following volumes. [29] Daubuisson, ii. 411.

animals of which the bones, found in the *lias* stratum, were at first supposed to be those of crocodiles. But in 1816[30], Sir Everard Home says, "In truth, on a consideration of this skeleton, we cannot but be inclined to believe, that among the animals destroyed by the catastrophes of remote antiquity, there had been some at least that differ so entirely in their structure from any which now exist as to make it impossible to arrange their fossil remains with any known class of animals." The animal thus referred to being clearly intermediate between fishes and lizards, was named by Mr. König, *Ichthyosaurus;* and its structure and constitution were more precisely determined by Mr. Conybeare in 1821, when he had occasion to compare with it another extinct animal of which he and Mr. De la Beche had collected the remains. This animal, still more nearly approaching the lizard tribe, was by Mr. Conybeare called *Plesiosaurus*[31]. Of each of these two genera several species were afterwards found.

Before this time, the differences of the races of animals and plants belonging to the past and the present periods of the earth's history, had become a leading subject of speculation among geological naturalists. The science produced by this study of the natural history of former states of the earth has been termed *Palæontology;* and there is no branch of human knowledge more fitted to stir men's wonder, or to excite them to the widest physiological specu-

[30] Phil. Tr. 1816, p. 20.

[31] Geol. Trans. vol. v.

lations. But in the present part of our history this science requires our notice, only so far as it aims at the restoration of the types of ancient animals, on clear and undoubted principles of comparative anatomy. To show how extensive and how conclusive is the science when thus directed, we need only refer to Cuvier's *Ossemens Fossiles*[32]; a work of vast labour and profound knowledge, which has opened wide the doors of this part of geology. I do not here attempt even to mention the labours of the many other eminent contributors to Palæontology; as Brocchi, Des Hayes, Sowerby, Goldfuss, Agassiz, who have employed themselves on animals, and Schlottheim, Brongniart, Hutton, Lindley, on plants.

When it had thus been established, that the strata of the earth are characterized by innumerable remains of the organised beings which formerly inhabited it, and that anatomical and physiological considerations must be carefully and skilfully applied in order rightly to interpret these characters, the geologist and the palæontologist obviously had brought before them, many very wide and striking questions. Of these we may give some instances; but, in the first place, we may add a few words concerning those eminent philosophers to whom the science owed the basis on which succeeding speculations were to be built.

[32] The first edition appeared in 1812, consisting principally of the Memoirs to which reference has already been made.

Sect. 5.—Intellectual Characters of the Founders of Systematic Descriptive Geology.

It would be in accordance with the course we have pursued in treating of other subjects, that we should attempt to point out, in the founders of the science now under consideration, those intellectual qualities and habits to which we ascribe their success. The very recent date of the generalisations of geology, which has hardly allowed us time to distinguish the calm expression of the opinion of the wisest judges, might, in this instance, relieve us from such a duty; but since our plan appears to suggest it, we will, at least, endeavour to mark the characters of the founders of geology, by a few of their prominent lines.

The three persons who must be looked upon as the main authors of geological classification are, Werner, Smith, and Cuvier. These three men were of very different mental constitution; and it will, perhaps, not be difficult to compare them, in reference to those qualities which we have all along represented as the main elements of the discoverer's genius, clearness of ideas, the possession of numerous facts, and the power of bringing these into contact.

In the German, considering him as a geologist, the ideal element predominated. That Werner's powers of external discrimination were extremely acute, we have seen in speaking of him as a mineralogist;

and his talent and tendency for classifying were, in his mineralogical studies, fully fed by an abundant store of observation; but when he came to apply this methodizing power to geology, the love of system, so fostered, appears to have been too strong for the collection of facts he had to deal with. As we have seen, he promulgated, as representing the world, a scheme collected from a province, and even too hastily gathered from that narrow field. Yet his intense spirit of method in some measure compensated for other deficiencies, and enabled him to give the character of a science to what had been before a collection of miscellaneous phenomena. The ardour of system-making produced a sort of fusion, which, however superficial, served to bind together the mass of incoherent and mixed materials, and thus to form, though by strange and anomalous means, a structure of no small strength and durability.

Of a very different temper and character was William Smith. No literary cultivation of his youth awoke in him the speculative love of symmetry and system; but a singular clearness and precision of the classifying power, which he possessed as a native talent, was exercised and developed by exactly those geological facts among which his philosophical task lay. Some of the advances which he made, had, as we have seen, been at least entered upon by others who preceded him: but of all this he was ignorant; and, perhaps, went on more steadily and eagerly to work out his own ideas, from the persuasion that they were entirely his own. At

a later period of his life, he himself described the views which had animated him in his earlier progress. In this account[34] he dates his attempts to discriminate and connect strata from the year 1790, at which time he was twenty years old. In 1792, he "had considered how he could best represent the order of superposition—continuity of course—and general eastern declination of the strata." Soon after, doubts which had arisen were removed by the "discovery of a mode of identifying the strata by the organized fossils respectively imbedded therein." And "thus stored with ideas," as he expresses himself, he began to communicate them to his friends. In all this, we see great vividness of thought, and activity of mind, unfolding itself exactly in proportion to the facts with which it had to deal. We are reminded of that cyclopean architecture in which each stone, as it occurs, is, with wonderful ingenuity, and with the least possible alteration of its form, shaped so as to fit its place in a solid and lasting edifice

Different yet again was the character (as a geological discoverer), of the great naturalist of the beginning of the nineteenth century. In that part of his labours of which we have now to speak, Cuvier's dominant ideas were rather physiological than geological. In his views of past physical changes, he did not seek to include any ranges of facts which lay much beyond the narrow field of the Paris basin. But his sagacity in applying his own great principle

[34] Phil. Mag. 1833, vol. i. p. 38.

of the conditions of existence, gave him a peculiar and unparalleled power in interpreting the most imperfect fossil records of extinct anatomy. In the constitution of his mind, all philosophical endowments were so admirably developed and disciplined, that it was difficult to say, whether more of his power was due to genius or to culture. The talent of classifying which he exercised in geology, was the result of the most complete knowledge and skill in zoology; while his views concerning the revolutions which had taken place in the organic and inorganic world, were in no small degree aided by an extraordinary command of historical and other literature. His guiding ideas had been formed, his facts had been studied, by the assistance of all the sciences which could be made to bear upon them. In his geological labours we seem to see some beautiful temple, not only firm and fair in itself, but decorated with sculpture and painting, and rich in all that art and labour, memory and imagination, can contribute to its beauty.

CHAPTER III.

SEQUEL TO THE FORMATION OF SYSTEMATIC DESCRIPTIVE GEOLOGY.

Sect. 1.—*Reception and Diffusion of Systematic Geology.*

IF our nearness to the time of the discoveries to which we have just referred, embarrasses us in speaking of their authors, it makes it still more difficult to narrate the reception with which these discoveries met. Yet here we may notice a few facts which may not be without their interest.

The impression which Werner made upon his hearers was very strong; and, as we have already said, disciples were gathered to his school from every country, and then went forth into every part of the world, animated by the views which they had caught from him. We may say of him, as has been so wisely said of a philosopher of a very different kind[1], "He owed his influence to various causes; at the head of which may be placed that genius for system, which, though it cramps the growth of knowledge, perhaps finally atones for that mischief by the zeal and activity which it rouses among fol-

[1] Mackintosh on Hobbes, Dissert. p. 177.

lowers and opponents, who discover truth by accident, when in pursuit of weapons for their warfare." The list of Werner's pupils for a considerable period included most of the principal geologists of Europe; as Freisleben, Mohs, Esmark, d'Andrada, Raumer, Engelhart, Charpentier, Brocchi. Alexander von Humboldt and Leopold von Buch went forth from his school to observe America and Siberia, the isles of the Atlantic, and the coast of Norway. Professor Jameson established at Edinburgh a Wernerian society; and his lecture-room became a second centre of Wernerian doctrines, whence proceeded many zealous geological observers; among these we may mention as one of the most distinguished, M. Ami Boué, though, like several others, he soon cast away the peculiar opinions of the Wernerian school. The classifications of this school were, however, diffused over the civilized world with extraordinary success; and were looked upon with great respect till the study of organic fossils threw them into the shade.

Smith, on the other hand, long pursued his own thoughts without aid and without sympathy. About 1799, he became acquainted with a few gentlemen (Dr. Anderson, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Townsend, and Mr. Davies,) who had already given some attention to organic fossils, and who were astonished to find his knowledge so much more exact and extensive than their own. From this time he conceived the intention of publishing his discoveries; but the want of literary leisure and habits long prevented him. His knowledge was orally communicated without reserve

to many persons; and thus gradually and insensibly became part of the public stock. When this diffusion of his views had gone on for some time, his friends began to complain that the author of them was deprived of his well-merited share of fame. His delay in publication made it difficult to remedy this; for soon after he published his geological map of England, another appeared, founded upon separate observations; and though, perhaps, not quite independent of his, yet in many respects much more detailed and correct. Thus, though his general ideas obtained universal currency, he did not assume his due prominence as a geologist. In 1818, a generous attempt was made to direct a proper degree of public gratitude to him, in an article in the Edinburgh Review, the production of Dr. Fitton, a distinguished English geologist. And when the eminent philosopher, Wollaston, had bequeathed to the Geological Society of London a fund from which a gold medal was to be awarded to geological services, the first of such medals was, in 1831, "given to Mr. William Smith, in consideration of his being a great original discoverer in English geology; and especially for his having been the first in this country to discover and to teach the identification of strata, and to determine their succession by means of their imbedded fossils."

Cuvier's discoveries, on the other hand, both from the high philosophic fame of their author, and from their intrinsic importance, arrested at once the attention of scientific Europe; and, notwithstanding

the undoubted priority of Smith's labours, for a long time were looked upon as the starting-point of our knowledge of organic fossils. And, in reality, although Cuvier's memoirs derived the greatest part of their value from his zoological conclusions, they reflected back no small portion of interest on the classifications of strata, which were involved in his inferences. And the views which he presented gave to geology an attractive and striking character, and a connexion with large physiological as well as physical principles, which added incomparably to its dignity and charm.

In tracing the reception and diffusion of doctrines such as those of Smith and Cuvier, we ought not to omit to notice more especially the formation and history of the Geological Society of London, just mentioned. It was established in 1807, with a view to multiply and record observations, and patiently to await the result at some future period; that is, its founders resolved to apply themselves to Descriptive Geology, thinking the time not come for that theoretical geology which had then long fired the controversial ardour of Neptunists and Plutonists. The first volume of the Transactions of this society was published in 1811. The greater part of the contents of this volume[a] savour of the notions of the Wernerian school; and there are papers on some of the districts in England most rich in fossils, which, Mr. Conybeare says, well exhibit the low state of secondary geology at that period. But

[a] Conybeare, Report, p. 372.

a paper by Mr. Parkinson refers to the discoveries both of Smith and of Cuvier; and in the next volume, Mr. Webster gives an account of the Isle of Wight, following the admirable model of Cuvier and Brongniart's account of the Paris basin. "If we compare this memoir of Mr. Webster with the preceding one of Dr. Berger, (also on the Isle of Wight,) they at once show themselves to belong to two very distinct eras of science; and it is difficult to believe that the interval which elapsed between their respective publication was only three or four years[8]."

Among the events belonging to the diffusion of sound geological views, we may notice the publication of a little volume entitled, "The Geology of England and Wales," by Mr. Conybeare and Mr. Phillips, in 1821; an event far more important than, from the modest form and character of the work, it might at first sight appear. By describing in detail the geological structure and circumstances of one part of England, (at least as far downwards as the coal,) it enabled a very wide class of readers to understand and verify the classifications which geology had then very recently established; while the extensive knowledge and philosophical spirit of Mr. Conybeare rendered it, under the guise of a topographical enumeration, in reality a profound and instructive scientific treatise. The vast impulse which it gave to the study of sound descriptive geology was felt and acknowledged in other countries, as well as in Britain.

Since that period, descriptive geology in England

[8] Conybeare, Report, p. 372.

has constantly advanced. The advance has been due mainly to the labours of the members of the Geological Society; on whose merits as cultivators of their science, none but those who are themselves masters of it, have a right to dwell. Yet some parts of the scientific character of these men may be appreciated by the general speculator; for they have shown that there are no talents and no endowments which may not find their fitting employment in this science. Besides that they have united laborious research and comprehensive views, acuteness and learning, zeal and knowledge; the philosophical eloquence with which they have conducted their discussions has had a most beneficial influence on the tone of their speculations; and their researches in the field, which have carried them into every country and every class of society, have given them that prompt and liberal spirit, and that open and cordial bearing, which results from intercourse with the world on a large and unfettered scale. It is not too much to say, that in our time, practical geology has been one of the best schools of philosophical and general culture of mind.

Sect. 2.—Application of Systematic Geology. Geological Surveys and Maps.

SUCH surveys as that which Conybeare and Phillips's book presented with respect to England, were not only a means of disseminating the knowledge implied in the classifications of such a work, but they

were also an essential part of the application and extension of the principles established by the founders of systematic geology. As soon as the truth of such a system was generally acknowledged, the persuasion of the propriety of geological surveys and maps of each country could not but impress itself on men's minds.

When the earlier writers, as Lister and Fontenelle, spoke of mineralogical and fossilological maps, they could hardly be said to know the meaning of the terms which they thus used. But when subsequent classifications had shown how such a suggestion might be carried into effect, and to what important consequences it might lead, the task was undertaken in various countries in a vigorous and consistent manner. In England, besides Smith's map, another, drawn up by Mr. Greenough, was published by the Geological Society in 1819; and, being founded on very numerous observations of the author and his friends, made with great labour and cost, was not only an important correction and confirmation of Smith's labours, but a valuable storehouse and standard of what had then been done in English geology. Leopold von Buch had constructed a geological map of a large portion of Germany, about the same period; but, aware of the difficulty of the task he had thus attempted, he still forbore to publish it. At a later period, and as materials accumulated, more detailed maps of parts of Germany were produced by Hoffmann and others. The French government entrusted to a distinguished Professor of the School of Mines, (M. Brochant de Villiers,) the task of

constructing a map of France on the model of Mr. Greenough's; associating with him two younger persons, selected for their energy and talents, MM. de Beaumont and Dufrénoy. We shall have occasion hereafter to speak of the execution of this survey. By various persons, geological maps of almost every country and province of Europe, and of many parts of Asia and America have been published. I need not enumerate these, but I may refer to the account given of them by Mr. Conybeare, in the Reports of the British Association for 1832, p. 384. These various essays may be considered as contributions, though hitherto undoubtedly very imperfect ones, to that at which Descriptive Geology ought to aim, and which is requisite as a foundation for sound theory;—a complete geological survey of the whole earth. But we must say a few words respecting the language in which such a survey must be written.

As we have already said, that which made such maps and the accompanying descriptions possible, was that the strata and their contents had previously undergone classification and arrangement at the hands of the fathers of geology. Classification, in this as in other cases, implied names which should give it distinctness and permanence; and when the series of strata belonging to one country were referred to in the description of another, in which they appeared, as was usually the case, under an aspect at least somewhat different, the supposed identification required a peculiar study of each case; and thus

geology had arrived at the point, which we have before had to notice as one of the stages of the progress of Classificatory Botany, at which a technical *nomenclature* and a well understood *synonymy* were essential parts of the science.

Sect. 3.—*Geological Nomenclature.*

By nomenclature we mean a *system* of names; and hence we cannot speak of a geological nomenclature till we come to Werner and Smith. The earlier mineralogists had employed names, often artificial and arbitrary, for special minerals, but no technical and constant names for strata. The elements of Werner's names for the members of his geological series were words in use among miners, as *gneiss, grauwacke, thonschiefer, rothe todte liegende, zechstein;* or arbitrary names of the mineralogists, as syenite, serpentine, porphyry, granite. But the more technical part of his phraseology was taken from that which is the worst kind of name, arbitrary numeration. Thus he had his *first* sandstone formation, *second* sandstone, *third* sandstone; *first* flötz limestone, *second* flötz limestone, *third* flötz limestone. Such names are, beyond all others, liable to mistake in their application, and likely to be expelled by the progress of knowledge; and accordingly, though the Wernerian names for rocks mineralogically distinguished have still some currency, his sandstones and limestones, after creating endless confusion while his authority had any sway, have utterly disappeared from good geological works.

The nomenclature of Smith was founded upon English provincial terms of very barbarous aspect, as *cornbrash, lias, gault, clunch clay, coral rag.* Yet these terms were widely diffused when his classification was generally accepted; they kept their place, precisely because they had no systematic signification; and many of them are at present part of the geological language of the whole civilised world.

Another kind of names which has been very prevalent among geologists is that which is borrowed from places. Thus the Wernerians spoke of Alpine limestone and Jura limestone, the English of Kimmeridge clay and Oxford clay, Purbeck marble, and Portland rock. These names, referring to the stratum of a known locality as a type, were good, as far as an identity with that type had been traced; but when this had been incompletely done, they were liable to great ambiguity. If the Alps or the Jura contain several formations of limestone, such terms as we have noticed, borrowed from those mountains, cease to be necessarily definite, and may give rise to much confusion.

Descriptive names, although they might be supposed to be the best, have, in fact, rarely been fortunate. The reason of this is obvious;—the mark which has been selected for description may easily fail to be essential; and the obvious connexions of natural facts may overleap the arbitrary definition. As we have already stated in the history of botany, the establishment of descriptive marks of real classes, presupposes the important but difficult step

of the discovery of such marks. Hence those descriptive names only have been really useful in geology which have been used without any scrupulous regard to the appropriateness of the description. The *green sand* may be white, brown, or red; the *mountain limestone* may occur only in valleys; the *oolite* may have no roe-like structure; and yet these may be excellent geological names, if they be applied to formations geologically identical with those which the phrases originally designated. The signification may assist the memory, but must not be allowed to subjugate the faculty of natural classification.

The terms which have been formed by geologists in recent times have been drawn from similar sources to those of the older ones, and will have their fortune determined by the same conditions. Thus Mr. Lyell has given to the divisions of the tertiary strata the appellations *pleiocene*, *meiocene*, *eocene*, accordingly as they contain a majority of recent species of shells, a minority of such species, or a small proportion of living species, which may be looked upon as indicating the dawn of the existing state of the animate creation. But in this case, he wisely treats his distinctions, not as definitions, but as the marks of natural groups. "The plurality of species indicated by the name pleiocene, must not," he says[4], "be understood to imply an absolute majority of recent fossil shells in all cases, but a comparative preponderance wherever the pleiocene are contrasted with strata of the period immediately preceding."

[4] Geol. iii. 392.

Mr. Lyell might have added, that no precise percentage of recent species, nor any numerical criterion whatever, can be allowed to overbear the closer natural relations of strata, proved by evidence of a superior kind, if such can be found. And this would be the proper answer to the objection made by M. De la Beche to these names; namely, that it may happen that the meiocene rocks of one country may be of the same data as the pleiocene of another. The names must not be so applied. The formation which has been called pleiocene, must continue to be so called; and all rocks that agree with that in date, without further reference to the numerical relations of their fossils, must also share in the name.

To invent good names for these large divisions of the series of strata is indeed extremely difficult. The term *oolite* is an instance in which a descriptive word has become permanent in a case of this kind; and, in imitation of it, *pœcilite* (from ποικίλος, various,) has been proposed by Mr. Conybeare[5] as a name for the group of strata inferior to the oolites, of which the *variegated* sandstone (bunter sandstein, grès bigarré,) is a conspicuous member. For the series of formations which lies immediately over the rocks in which no organic remains are found, the term *transition* was long used, but with extreme ambiguity and vagueness. When this series, or rather the upper part of it, was well examined in South Wales, where it consists of many well-marked members, and may be probably taken as a type for a large portion of

[5] Report, p. 379.

the rest of the world, it became necessary to give to the group thus explored a name not necessarily leading to assumption or controversy. Mr. Murchison selected the term *Silurian*, borrowed from the former inhabitants of the country in which his types were found; and this is a term excellent in many respects; but one which will probably not quite supersede "transition," because, in other places, transition rocks occur which correspond to none of the members of the Silurian region.

Though new names are inevitable accompaniments of new views of classification, and though, therefore, the geological discoverer must be allowed a right to coin them, this is a privilege which, for the sake of his own credit, and the circulation of his tokens, he must exercise with great temperance and judgment. M. Brongniart may be taken as an example of the neglect of this caution. Acting upon the principle, in itself a sound one, that inconveniences arise from geological terms which have a mineralogical signification, he has given an entirely new list of names of the members of the geological series. Thus the primitive unstratified rocks are *terrains agalysiens;* the transition semi-compact are *hemilysiens;* the sedimentary strata are *yzemiens;* the diluvial deposits are *clysmiens*; and these divisions are subdivided by designations equally novel; thus of the "terrains yzemiens," members are the terrains *clastiques, tritoniens, protéïques, palæotheriens, epilymniques, thalassiques*[6]. Such a nomenclature appears

[6] Brongniart, Tableau des Terrains, 1829.

to labour under great inconveniences, since the terms are descriptive in their derivation yet are not generally intelligible, and refer to theoretical views yet have not the recommendation of systematic connexion.

Sect. 4.—*Geological Synonymy, or Determination of Geological Equivalents.*

It will easily be supposed that with so many different sources of names as we have mentioned, the same stratum may be called by different designations; and thus a synonymy may be necessary for geology, as it was for botany in the time of Bauhin, when the same plants had been spoken of by so many different appellations in different authors. But in reality, the synonymy of geology is a still more important part of the subject than the analogy of botany would lead us to suppose. For in plants, the species are really fixed, and easily known when seen; and the ambiguity is only in the imperfect communication or confused ideas of the observers. But in geology, the identity of a stratum or formation in different places, though not an arbitrary, may be a very doubtful matter, even to him who has seen and examined. To assign its right character and place to a stratum in a new country, is, in a great degree, to establish the whole geological history of the country. To assume that the same names may rightly be applied to the strata of different countries, is to take for granted, not indeed the Wernerian dogma of universal formations, but a con-

siderable degree of generality and uniformity in the known formations. And how far this generality and uniformity prevail, observation alone can teach. The search for geological synonyms in different countries brings before us two questions;—first, *are* there such synonyms? and only in the second place, and as far as they occur, *what* are they?

In fact, it is found that although formations which must be considered as geologically identical (because otherwise no classification is possible,) do extend over large regions, and pass from country to country, their identity includes certain modifications; and the determination of the identity and of the modifications are inseparably involved with each other, and almost necessarily entangled with theoretical considerations. And in two countries, in which we find this modified coincidence, instead of saying that the strata are identical, and that their designations are synonyms, we may, with more propriety, consider them as two corresponding series; of which the members of the one may be treated as the *representatives* or *equivalents* of the members of the other.

This doctrine of representatives or equivalents supposes that the geological phenomena in the two countries have been the results of similar series of events, which have, in some measure, coincided in time and order; and thus, as we have said, refers us to a theory. But yet, considered merely as a step in classification, the comparison of the geological series of strata in different countries is, in the highest degree, important and interesting. Indeed, in the same manner in which the separation of classifica-

tory from chemical mineralogy is necessary for the completion of that science, the comparative classification of the strata of different countries according to their resemblances and differences alone, is requisite as a basis for a theory of their causes. But, as will easily be imagined from its nature, this part of descriptive geology deals with both the most difficult and the most elevated problems; and requires a rare union of laborious observation with a comprehensive spirit of philosophical classification.

In order to give instances of this process (for of the vast labour and great talents which have thus been employed in England, France, and Germany, it is only instances that we can give,) I may refer to the geological survey of France, which was executed, as we have already stated, by order of the government. In this undertaking it was intended to obtain a knowledge of the whole mineral structure of France; but no small portion of this knowledge was brought into view, when a synonymy had been established between the secondary rocks of France and the corresponding members of the English and German series, which had been so well studied as to have become classical points of standard reference. For the purpose of doing this, the principal directors of the survey, MM. Brochant de Villiers, De Beaumont, and Dufrénoy, came to England in 1822, and following the steps of the best English geologists, in a few months made themselves acquainted with the English series. They then returned to France, and, starting from the chalk of Paris in various directions, travelled on the lines which carried them over the

edges of the strata which emerge from beneath the chalk, identifying, as they could, the strata with their foreign analogues. They thus recognized almost all of the principal beds of the oolitic series of England[7]. At the same time they found differences as well as resemblances. Thus the Portland and Kimmeridge beds of France were found to contain in abundance a certain shell, the *gryphæa virgula*, which had not before been much remarked in those beds in England. With regard to the synonyms in Germany, on the other hand, a difference of opinion arose between M. Elie de Beaumont and M. Voltz[8], the former considering the *Grès de Vosges* as the equivalent of the *rothe todte liegende*, which occurs beneath the zechstein, while M. Voltz held that it was the lower portion of the red or *variegated sandstone* which rests on the zechstein.

In the same manner, from the first promulgation of the Wernerian system, attempts were made to identify the English with the German members of the geological alphabet; but it was long before this alphabet was rightly read. Thus the English geologists who first tried to apply the Wernerian series to this country, conceived the old and new red sandstone of England to be the same with the old and new red sandstone of Werner; whereas Werner's old red, the rothe todte liegende, is above the coal, while the English old red is below it. This mistake led to a further erroneous identification of our mountain limestone with Werner's first flötz limestone; and caused an almost inextricable con-

[7] De la Beche, Manual, 305.

[8] Ib. 381.

fusion, which, even at a recent period, has perplexed the views of German geologists respecting this country. Again, the lias of England was, at first, supposed to be the equivalent of the muschelkalk of Germany. But the error of this identification was brought into view by examinations and discussions in which MM. Œyenhausen and Dechen took the lead; and at a later period, Professor Sedgwick, by a laborious examination of the strata of England, was enabled to show the true relation of this part of the geology of the two countries. According to him, the new red sandstone of England, considered as one great complex formation, may be divided into seven members, composed of sandstones, limestones, and marls; five of which represent respectively the *rothe todte liegende;* the *kupfer schiefer;* the *zechstein*, with the *rauchwacké*, *asche*, and *stinkstein* of the Thuringenwald; the *bunter sandstein;* and the *keuper:* the *muschelkalk*, which lies between the two last members of the German list, not having yet been discovered in our geological series. "Such a coincidence," he observes[9], "in the subdivisions of two distant mechanical deposits, even upon the supposition of their being strictly contemporaneous, is truly astonishing. It has not been assumed hypothetically, but is the fair result of the facts which are recorded in this paper."

As an example in which the study of geological equivalents becomes still more difficult, we may notice the attempts to refer the strata of the Alps to those of the north-west of Europe. The dark

[9] Geol. Trans. 2d Series, iii. 121.

coloured marbles and schists resembling mica slate[10] were, during the prevalence of the Wernerian theory, referred, as was natural, to the transition class. The striking physical characters of this mountain region, and its long-standing celebrity as a subject of mineralogical examination, made a complete subversion of the received opinion respecting its place in the geological series, an event of great importance in the history of the science. Yet this was what occurred when Dr. Buckland, in 1820, threw his piercing glance upon this district. He immediately pointed out that these masses, by their fossils, approach to the oolitic series of this country. From this view it followed, that the geological equivalents of that series were to be found among rocks in which the mineralogical characters were altogether different, and that the loose limestones of England represent some of the highly-compact and crystalline marbles of Italy and Greece. This view was confirmed by subsequent investigations; and the correspondence was traced, not only in the general body of the formations, but in the occurrence of the red marl at its bottom, and the green sand and chalk at its top.

The talents and the knowledge which such tasks require are of no ordinary kind; nor, even with a consummate acquaintance with the well-ascertained formations, can the place of problematical strata be decided without immense labour. Thus the examination and delineation of hundreds of shells by the most skilful conchologists, has been thought neces-

[10] De la Beche, Manual, 313.

sary in order to determine whether the calcareous beds of Maestricht and of Gosau are or are not intermediate, as to their organic contents, between the chalk and the tertiary formations. And scarcely any point of geological classification can be settled without a similar union of the accomplished naturalist with the laborious geological collector.

It follows from the views already presented of this part of geology, that no attempt to apply to distant countries the names by which the well-known European strata have been described, can be of any value, if not accompanied by a corresponding attempt to show how far the European series is really applicable. This must be borne in mind in estimating the import of the geological accounts which have been given of various parts of Asia, Africa, and America. For instance, when the carboniferous group and the new red sandstone are stated to be found in India, we require to be assured that these formations are, in some way, the equivalents of their synonyms in countries better explored. Till this is done, the results of observation in such places would be better conveyed by a nomenclature implying only those facts of resemblance, difference, and order, which have been ascertained in the country so described. We know that serious errors were incurred by the attempts made to identify the tertiary strata of other countries with those first studied in the Paris basin. Fancied points of resemblance, Mr. Lyell observes, were magnified into undue importance, and essential differences in mineral character and organic contents were slurred over.

CHAPTER IV.

Attempts to Discover General Laws in Geology.

Sect. 1.—*General Geological Phenomena.*

Besides thus noticing such features in the rocks of each country as were necessary to the identification of the strata, geologists have had many other phenomena of the earth's surface and materials presented to their notice; and these they have, to a certain extent, attempted to generalize, so as to obtain on this subject what we have elsewhere termed the laws of phenomena, which are the best materials for physical theory. Without dwelling long upon these, we may briefly note some of the most obvious. Thus it has been observed that mountain-ranges often consist of a ridge of subjacent rock, on which lie, on each side, strata sloping from the ridge. Such a ridge is an *anticlinal line*, a *mineralogical axis*. The sloping strata present their *escarpments*, or steep edges, to this axis. Again, in mining countries, the *veins* which contain the ore are usually a system of *parallel* and nearly vertical partitions in the rock; and these are, in very many cases, intersected by another system of veins parallel to each other, and nearly *perpendicular* to the former. Countries are

often intersected by *faults*, or fissures interrupting the strata, in which the rock on one side the fissure appears to have been at first continuous with that on the other, and shoved aside or up or down after the fracture. Again, besides these larger fractures, rocks have *joints*,—separations, or tendencies to separate in some directions rather than in others; and a *slaty cleavage*, in which the parallel subdivisions may be carried on, so as to produce laminæ of indefinite thinness. As an example of those laws of phenomena of which we have spoken, we may instance the general law asserted by Prof. Sedgwick, (not, however, as free from exception,) that in one particular class of rocks the slaty cleavage *never* coincides with the direction of the strata.

The phenomena of metalliferous veins may be referred to, as another large class of facts which demand the notice of the geologist. It would be difficult to point out briefly any general laws which prevail in such cases; but in order to show the curious and complex nature of the facts, it may be sufficient to refer to the description of the metallic veins of Cornwall by Mr. Carne[1]; in which the author maintains that their various contents, and the manner in which they cut across, and *stop*, or *shift*, each other, leads naturally to the assumption of veins of no less than six or eight different ages in one kind of rock.

Again, as important characters belonging to the physical history of the earth, and therefore to geology,

[1] Transactions of the Geol. Soc. of Cornwall, vol. ii.

we may notice all the general laws which refer to its temperature;—both the laws of climate, as determined by the *isothermal lines*, which Humboldt has drawn, by the aid of very numerous observations made in all parts of the world; and also those still more curious facts, of the increase of temperature which takes place as we descend in the solid mass. The latter circumstance, after being for a while rejected as a fable, or explained away as an accident, is now generally acknowledged to be the true state of things in many distant parts of the globe, and probably in all.

Again, to turn to cases of another kind: some writers have endeavoured to state in a general manner laws according to which the members of the geological series succeed each other; and to reduce apparent anomalies to order of a wider kind. Among those who have written with such views, we may notice Alexander von Humboldt, always, and in all sciences, foremost in the race of generalisation. In his attempt to extend the doctrine of geological equivalents from the rocks of Europe[2] to those of the Andes, he has marked by appropriate terms the general modes of geological succession. "I have insisted," he says[3], "principally upon the phenomena of *alternation*, *oscillation*, and *local suppression*, and on those presented by the *passages* of formations from one to another, by the effect of an *interior developement*."

[2] Gissement des Roches dans les deux Hémisphéres, 1823.

[3] Pref. p. vi.

The phenomena of alternation to which Humboldt here refers are, in fact, very curious: as exhibiting a mode in which the transitions from one formation to another may become gradual and insensible, instead of sudden and abrupt. Thus the coal measures in the south of England are above the mountain limestone; and the distinction of the formations is of the most marked kind. But as we advance northward into the coal field of Yorkshire and Durham, the subjacent limestone begins to be subdivided by thick masses of sandstone and carbonaceous strata, and passes into a complex deposit, not distinguishable from the overlying coal measures; and in this manner the transition from the limestone to the coal is made by alternation. Thus, to use another expression of Humboldt's, in ascending from the limestone, the coal, before we quit the subjacent stratum, *preludes* to its fuller exhibition in the superior beds.

Again, as to another point: geologists have gone on up to the present time endeavouring to discover general laws and facts, with regard to the position of mountain and mineral masses upon the surface of the earth. Thus Von Buch, in his physical description of the Canaries, has given a masterly description of the lines of volcanic action and volcanic products, all over the globe. And, more recently, M. Elie de Beaumont has offered some generalisations of a still wider kind. In this new doctrine, those mountain ranges, even in distant parts of the world, which are of the same age, according to the classifications already spoken of, are

asserted to be parallel[4] to each other, while those ranges which are of different ages lie in different directions. This very wide and striking proposition may be considered as being at present upon its trial among the geologists of Europe.

Among the organic phenomena, also, which have been the subject of geological study, general laws of a very wide and comprehensive kind have been suggested, and in a greater or less degree confirmed by adequate assemblages of facts. Thus M. Adolphe Brongniart has not only, in his *Fossil Flora*, represented and skilfully restored a vast number of the plants of the ancient world; but he has also, in the *Prodromus* of the work, presented various important and striking views of the general character of the vegetation of former periods, as insular or continental, tropical or temperate. And M. Agassiz, by the examination of an incredible number of specimens and collections of fossil fish, has been led to results which, expressed in terms of his own ichthyological classification, form remarkable general laws. Thus, according to him[5], when we go below the lias, we lose all traces of two of the four orders under which he comprehends all known kinds of fish; namely, the *Cycloïdean* and the *Ctenoïdean;* while the other two orders, rare in our days, suddenly appear in great

[4] We may observe that the notion of parallelism, when applied to lines drawn on *remote* portions of a globular surface, requires to be interpreted in so arbitrary a manner, that we can hardly imagine it to express a physical law.

[5] Greenough, Address to Geol. Soc. 1835, p. 19.

numbers, together with large sauroid and carnivorous fishes. Cuvier, in constructing his great work on ichthyology, transferred to M. Agassiz the whole subject of fossil fishes, thus showing how highly he esteemed his talents as a naturalist. And M. Agassiz has shown himself worthy of his great predecessor in geological natural history, not only by his acuteness and activity, but by the comprehensive character of his zoological philosophy, and by the courage with which he has addressed himself to the vast labours which lie before him. In his "Report on the Fossil Fish discovered in England," published in 1835, he briefly sketches some of the large questions which his researches have suggested; and then adds[6], "Such is the meagre outline of a history of the highest interest, full of curious episodes, but most difficult to relate. To unfold the details which it contains will be the business of my life."

Sect. 2.—*Transition to Geological Dynamics.*

WHILE we have been giving this account of the objects with which Descriptive Geology is occupied, it must have been felt how difficult it is, in contemplating such facts, to confine ourselves to description and classification. Conjectures and reasonings respecting the causes of the phenomena force themselves upon us at every step; and even influence our classification and nomenclature. Our Descriptive Geology impels us to endeavour to construct a Phy-

[6] Report, p. 72.

sical Geology. This close connexion of the two branches of the subject by no means invalidates the necessity of distinguishing them: as in Botany, although the formation of a Natural System necessarily brings us to physiological relations, we still distinguish Systematic from Physiological Botany.

Supposing, however, our Descriptive Geology to be completed, as far as can be done without considering closely the causes by which the strata have been produced, we have now to enter upon the other province of the science, which treats of those causes, and of which we have already spoken, as *Physical Geology*. But before we can treat this department of speculation in a manner suitable to the conditions of science, and to the analogy of other parts of our knowledge, a certain intermediate and preparatory science must be formed, of which we shall now consider the origin and progress.

GEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS.

CHAPTER V.

Inorganic Geological Dynamics.

Sect. 1.—*Necessity and Object of a Science of Geological Dynamics.*

When the structure and arrangement which men observed in the materials of the earth instigated them to speculate concerning the past changes and revolutions by which such results had been produced, they at first supposed themselves sufficiently able to judge what would be the effects of any of the obvious agents of change, as water or volcanic fire. It did not at once occur to them to suspect, that their common and extemporaneous judgment on such points was far from sufficient for sound knowledge; —they did not foresee that they must create a special science, whose object should be to estimate the general laws and effects of assumed causes, before they could pronounce whether such causes had actually produced the particular facts which their survey of the earth had disclosed to them.

Yet the analogy of the progress of knowledge on other subjects, points out very clearly the necessity

of such a science. When phenomenal astronomy had arrived at a high point of completeness, by the labours of ages, and especially by the discovery of Kepler's laws, astronomers were vehemently desirous of knowing the causes of these motions; and sanguine men, such as Kepler, readily conjectured that the motions were the effects of certain virtues and influences, by which the heavenly bodies acted upon each other. But it did not at first occur to him and his fellow-speculators, that they had not ascertained what motions the influences of one body upon another could produce; and that, therefore, they were not prepared to judge whether such causes as they spoke of, did really regulate the motions of the planets.

Yet such was found to be the necessary course of sound inference. Men needed a science of motion, in order to arrive at a science of the heavenly motions: they could not advance in the study of the mechanics of the heavens, till they had learned the mechanics of terrestrial bodies. And thus they were, in such speculations, at a stand for nearly a century, from the time of Kepler to the time of Newton, while the science of mechanics was formed by Galileo and his successors. Till that task was executed, all the attempts to assign the causes of cosmical phenomena were fanciful guesses and vague assertions; after that was done, they became demonstrations. The science of *Dynamics* enabled philosophers to pass securely and completely from *Phenomenal Astronomy* to *Physical Astronomy*.

In like manner, in order that we may advance from Phenomenal Geology to Physical Geology, we need a science of *Geological Dynamics*;—that is, a science which shall investigate and determine the laws and consequences of the known causes of changes such as those which geology considers;—and which shall do this, not in an occasional, imperfect, and unconnected manner, but by systematic, complete, and conclusive methods;—shall, in short, be a science, and not a promiscuous assemblage of desultory essays.

The necessity of such a study, as a distinct branch of geology, is perhaps hardly yet formally recognised, although the researches which belong to it have, of late years, assumed a much more methodical and scientific character than they before possessed. Mr. Lyell's work on Geology in particular, has eminently contributed to place Geological Dynamics in its proper prominent position. Of the four books of his Treatise, the second and third are upon this division of the subject; the second book treating of aqueous and igneous causes of change, and the third, of changes in the organic world.

There is no difficulty in separating this auxiliary geological science from theoretical geology itself, in which we apply our principles to the explanation of the actual facts of the earth's surface. The former, if perfected, would be a demonstrative science dealing with general cases, the latter is an ætiological view having reference to special facts: the one attempts to determine what always must be under

given conditions: the other is satisfied with knowing what is and has been, and why it has been: the first study has a strong resemblance to mechanics, the other to philosophical antiquarianism.

Since this portion of science is still so new, it is scarcely possible to give any historical account of its progress, or any complete survey of its shape and component parts. I can only attempt a few notices, which may enable us in some measure to judge to what point this division of our subject is tending.

We may remark, in this as in former cases, that since we have here to consider the formation and progress of a *science*, we must treat as unimportant preludes to its history, the detached and casual observations of the effects of causes of change which we find in older writers. It is only when we come to systematic collections of information, such as may afford the means of drawing general conclusions; or to rigorous deductions from known laws of nature;—that we can recognise the separate existence of geological dynamics, as a path of scientific research.

The following may perhaps suffice, for the present, as a sketch of the subjects of which this science treats:—the aqueous causes of change, or those in which water adds to, takes from, or transfers, the materials of the land:—the igneous causes; volcanoes, and, closely connected with them, earthquakes, and the forces by which they are produced;—the calculations which determine, on physical principles, the effects of assumed mechanical causes acting upon large portions of the crust of the earth;—the effect

of the forces, whatever they be, which produce the crystalline texture of rocks, their fissile structure, and the separation of materials, of which we see the results in metalliferous veins. Again, the estimation of the results of changes of temperature in the earth, whether operating by pressure, expansion, or in any other way;—the effects of assumed changes in the superficial condition, extent, and elevation, of terrestrial continents upon the climates of the earth;—the effect of assumed cosmical changes upon the temperature of this planet;—and researches of the same nature as these.

These researches are concerned with the causes of change in the inorganic world; but the subject requires no less that we should investigate the causes which may modify the forms and condition of organic things; and in the large sense in which we have to use the phrase, we may include researches on such subjects also as parts of geological dynamics, although, in truth, this department of physiology has been cultivated, as it well deserves to be, independently of its bearing upon geological theories. The great problem which offers itself here, in reference to geology, is, to examine the value of any hypotheses by which it may be attempted to explain the succession of different races of animals and plants in different strata; and though it may be difficult, in this inquiry, to arrive at any positive result, we may at least be able to show the improbability of some conjectures which have been propounded.

I shall now give a very brief account of some of

the attempts made in these various departments of this province of our knowledge; and in the present chapter of inorganic changes.

Sect. 2.—Aqueous Causes of Change.

THE controversies to which the various theories of geologists gave rise, proceeding in various ways upon the effects of the existing causes of change, led men to observe, with some attention and perseverance, the actual operation of such causes. In this way, the known effect of the Rhine, in filling up the lake of Geneva at its upper extremity, was referred to by De Luc, Kirwan, and others, in their dispute with the Huttonians; and attempts were even made to calculate how distant the period was, when this alluvial deposit first began. Other modern observers have attended to similar facts in the natural history of rivers and seas. But the subject may be considered as having first assumed its proper form, when taken up by Mr. Von Hof; of whose "History of the Natural Changes of the Earth's Surface which are proved by Tradition," the first part, treating of aqueous changes, appeared in 1822. This work was occasioned by a Prize Question of the Royal Society of Göttingen, promulgated in 1818; in which these changes were proposed as the subject of inquiry, with a special reference to geology. Although Von Hof does not attempt to establish any general inductions upon the facts which his book contains, the collection of such a body of facts gave almost a new aspect

to the subject, by showing that changes in the relative extent of land and water were going on at every time, and almost at every place; and that mutability and fluctuation in the form of the solid parts of the earth, which had been supposed by most persons to be a rare exception to the common course of events, was, in fact, the universal rule. But it was Mr. Lyell's "Principles of Geology, being an attempt to explain the former Changes of the Earth's Surface by the Causes now in action," (of which the first volume was published in 1830,) which disclosed the full effect of such researches on geology; and which attempted to present such assemblages of special facts, as examples of general laws. Thus this work may, as we have said, be looked upon as the beginning of Geological Dynamics, at least among us. Such generalisations and applications as it contains give the most lively interest to a thousand observations respecting rivers and floods, mountains and morasses, which otherwise appear without aim or meaning; and thus this department of science cannot fail to be constantly augmented by contributions from every side. At the same time it is clear, that these contributions, voluminous as they must become, must, from time to time, be resolved into laws of greater and greater generality; and that thus alone the progress of this, as of all other sciences, can be furthered.

I need not attempt any detailed enumeration of the modes of aqueous action which are here to be considered. Some are destructive, as when the rivers

erode the channels in which they flow; or when the waves of the ocean, by their perpetual assault, shatter the shores, and carry the ruins of them into the abyss of the ocean. Some operations of the water, on the other hand, add to the land; as when *deltas* are formed at the mouths of rivers, or when calcareous springs form deposits of *travertin*. Even when bound in icy fetters, water is by no means deprived of its active power; the *glacier* carries into the valley masses of its native mountain, and often floats with a lading of such materials far into the seas of the temperate zone. It is indisputable that vast beds of worn-down fragments of the existing land are now forming into strata at the bottom of the ocean; and that many other effects are constantly produced by existing aqueous causes, which resemble some, at least, of the facts which geology has to explain.

Although the study of the common operations of water may give the geologist such an acquaintance with the laws of his subject as may much aid his judgment respecting the extent to which such effects may proceed, a long course of observation and thought must be requisite before such operations can be analyzed into their fundamental principles, and become the subjects of calculation, or of rigorous reasoning in any manner which is as precise and certain as calculation. Various portions of hydraulics have an important bearing upon these subjects, including some researches which have been pursued with no small labour by engineers and mathema-

ticians; as the effects of currents and waves, the laws of tides and of rivers, and many similar problems. In truth, however, such subjects have not hitherto been treated by mathematicians with much success; and probably several generations must elapse before this portion of geological dynamics can become an exact science.

Sect. 3.—Igneous Causes of Change.—Motions of the Earth's Surface.

THE effects of volcanoes have long been noted as important and striking features in the physical history of our globe; and the probability of their connexion with many geological phenomena, had not escaped notice at an early period. But it was not till more recent times, that the full import of these phenomena was apprehended. The person who first looked at such operations with 'that commanding general view which showed their extensive connexion with physical geology, was Alexander von Humboldt, who explored the volcanic phenomena of the New World, from 1799 to 1804. He remarked[1] the linear distribution of volcanic domes, considering them as vents placed along the edge of vast fissures communicating with reservoirs of igneous matter, and extending across whole continents. He observed, also, the frequent sympathy of volcanic and terremotive action in remote districts of the earth's surface, thus showing how deeply-seated must be the cause

[1] Humboldt, Relation Historique; and his other works.

of these convulsions. These views strongly excited and influenced the speculations of geologists; and since then, phenomena of this kind have been collected into a general view as parts of a natural historical science. Von Hof, in the second volume of the work already mentioned, was one of the first who did this; "At least," he himself says[2], (1824,) "it was not known to him that any one before him had endeavoured to combine so large a mass of facts with the general ideas of the natural philosopher, so as to form a whole." Other attempts were, however, soon made. In 1825, M. von Ungern-Sternberg published his book "On the Nature and Origin of Volcanoes[3]," in which, he says, his object is, to give an empirical representation of these phenomena. In the same year, Mr. Poulett Scrope published a work in which he described the known facts of volcanic action; not, however, confining himself to description; his purpose being, as his title states, to consider "the probable causes of their phenomena, the laws which determine their march, the disposition of their products, and their connexion with the present state and past history of the globe; leading to the establishment of a new theory of the earth." And in 1826, Dr. Daubeny, of Oxford, produced "A Description of Active *and Extinct* Volcanoes," including in the latter phrase, the volcanic rocks of central France, of the Rhine,

[2] Vol. ii. Prop. 5.

[3] Werden und Seyn des Vulkanischen Gebirges, Carlsruhe, 1825.

of northern and central Italy, and many other countries. Indeed, the near connexion between the volcanic effects now going on, and those by which the basaltic rocks of Auvergne and many other places had been produced, was, by this time, no longer doubted by any; and therefore the line which here separates the study of existing causes from that of past effects may seem to melt away. But yet it is manifest that the assumption of an identity of scale and mechanism between volcanoes now active, and the igneous catastrophes of which the products have survived great revolutions on the earth's surface, is hypothetical; and all which depends on this assumption belongs to theoretical geology.

Confining ourselves, then, to volcanic effects which have been produced, certainly or probably, since the earth's surface assumed its present form, we have still an ample exhibition of powerful causes of change, in the streams of lava and other materials emitted in eruptions; and still more in the earthquakes which, as men easily satisfied themselves, are produced by the same causes as the eruptions of volcanic fire.

Mr. Lyell's work was important in this as in other portions of this subject. He extended the conceptions previously entertained of the effects which such causes may produce, not only by showing how great these operations are historically known to have been, and how constantly they are going on, if we take into our survey the whole surface of the earth; but still more, by urging the consequences

which would follow in a long course of time from the constant repetition of operations in themselves of no extraordinary amount. A lava-stream many miles long and wide, and several yards deep, a subsidence or elevation of a portion of the earth's surface of a few feet, are by no means extraordinary facts. Let these operations, said Mr. Lyell, be repeated thousands of times; and we have results of the same order with the changes which geology discloses.

The most mitigated earthquakes have, however, a character of violence. But it has been thought by many philosophers that there is evidence of a change of level of the land in cases where none of these violent operations are going on. The most celebrated of these cases is Sweden; the whole of the land from Gottenburg to the north of the Gulf of Bothnia has been supposed to be in the act of rising, slowly and insensibly, from the surrounding waters. The opinion of such a change of level has long been the belief of the inhabitants; and was maintained by Celsius in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It has since been conceived to be confirmed by various observations of marks cut on the face of the rock; beds of shells, such as now live in the neighbouring seas, raised to a considerable height; and other indications. Some of these proofs appear doubtful; but Mr. Lyell, after examining the facts upon the spot in 1834, says, "In regard to the proposition that the land, in certain parts of Sweden, is gradually rising, I have no hesitation in

assenting to it, after my visit to the districts above alluded to[4]." If this conclusion be generally accepted by geologists, we have here a daily example of the operation of some powerful agent which belongs to geological dynamics; and which for the purposes of the geological theorist, does the work of the earthquake upon a very large scale, without assuming its terrors.

Speculations concerning the *causes* of volcanoes and earthquakes, and of the rising and sinking of land, are a highly-important portion of this science, at least as far as the calculation of the possible results of definite causes is concerned. But the various hypotheses which have been propounded on this subject can hardly be considered as sufficiently matured for such calculation. A mass of matter in a state of igneous fusion, extending to the centre of the earth, even if we make such an hypothesis, requires some additional cause to produce eruption. The supposition that this fire may be produced by intense chemical action between combining elements, requires further, not only some agency to bring together such elements, but some reason why they should be originally separate. And if any other causes have been suggested, as electricity or magnetism, this has been done so vaguely as to elude all possibility of rigorous deduction from the hypothesis. The doctrine of a central heat, however, has occupied so considerable a place in theoretical geology, that it ought undoubtedly to form an article in geological dynamics.

[4] Phil. Tr. 1835, p. 32.

Sect. 4.—*The Doctrine of Central Heat.*

THE early geological theorists who, like Leibnitz and Buffon, assumed that the earth was originally a mass in a state of igneous fusion, naturally went on to deduce from this hypothesis, that the crust consolidated and cooled before the interior, and that there might still remain a central heat, capable of producing many important effects. But it is in more recent times that we have measures of such effects, and calculations which we can compare with measures. It was found, as we have said, that in descending below the surface of the earth, the temperature of its materials increased. Now it followed from Fourier's mathematical investigations of the distribution of heat in the earth, that if there be no primitive heat, (*chaleur d'origine,*) the temperature, when we descend below the crust, will be constant in each vertical line. Hence an observed increase of temperature in descending, appeared to point out a central heat resulting from some cause now no longer in action.

The doctrine of a central heat has usually been combined with the supposition of a central igneous fluidity; for the heat in the neighbourhood of the centre must be very intense, according to any law of its increase in descending which is consistent with known principles. But to this central fluidity it has been objected that such a fluid must be in constant circulation by the cooling of its exterior.

Mr. Daniell found this to be the case in all fused metals. It has also been objected that there must be, in such a central fluid, *tides* produced by the moon and sun; but this inference would require several additional suppositions and calculations to give it a precise form.

Again, the supposition of a central heat of the earth, considered as the effect of a more ancient state of its mass, appeared to indicate that its cooling must still be going on. But if this were so, the earth might contract, as most bodies do when they cool; and this contraction might lead to mechanical results, as the shortening of the day. Laplace satisfied himself, by reference to ancient astronomical records, that no such alteration in the length of the day had taken place, even to the amount of one two-hundredth of a second; and thus, there was here no confirmation of the hypothesis of a primitive heat of the earth.

Though we find no evidence of the secular contraction of the earth in the observations with which astronomy deals, there are some geological facts which at first appear to point to the reality of a refrigeration within geological periods; as the existence of the remains of plants and shells of tropical climates, in the strata of countries which are now near to or within the frigid zones. These facts, however, have given rise to theories of the changes of climate, which we must consider separately.

But we may notice, as connected with the doctrine of central heat, the manner in which this

hypothesis has been applied to explain volcanic and geological phenomena. It does not enter into my plan, to consider explanations in which this central heat is supposed to give rise to an expansive force[5], without any distinct reference to known physical laws. But we may notice, as more likely to become useful materials of the science now before us, such speculations as those of Mr. Babbage[6]; in which he combines the doctrine of central heat with other physical laws; as, that solid rocks *expand* by being heated, but that clay contracts; that different rocks and strata *conduct* heat differently; that the earth *radiates* heat differently, or at different parts of its surface, according as it is covered with forests, with mountains, with deserts, or with water. These principles, applied to large masses, such as those which constitute the crust of the earth, might give rise to changes as great as any which geology discloses. For example: when the bed of a sea is covered by a thick deposit of new matter worn from the shores, the strata below the bed, being protected by a bad conductor of heat, will be heated, and, being heated, may be expanded; or, as Sir J. Herschel has observed, may produce explosion by the conversion of their moisture into steam. Such speculations, when founded on real data and sound calculations, may hereafter be of material use in geology.

[5] Scrope on Volcanoes, p. 192.

[6] On the Temple of Serapis, 1834. See also Journal of the Royal Inst. vol. ii., quoted in Conyb. and Ph. p. xv. Lyell, B. ii. c. xix. p. 383, on expansion of stone.

The doctrine of central heat and fluidity has been rejected by some eminent philosophers. Mr. Lyell's reasons for this rejection belong rather to Theoretical Geology; but I may here notice M. Poisson's opinion. He does not assent to the conclusion of Fourier, that since the temperature increases in descending, there must be some primitive central heat. On the contrary, he considers that such an increase may arise from this;—that the earth, at some former period, passed (by the motion of the solar system in the universe,) through a portion of space which was warmer than the space in which it now revolves (by reason, it may be, of the heat of other stars to which it was then nearer). He supposes that, since such a period, the surface has cooled down by the influence of the surrounding circumstances; while the interior, for a certain unknown depth, retains the trace of the former elevation of temperature. But this assumption is not likely to expel the belief in the terrestrial origin of the subterraneous heat. For the supposition of such an inequality in the temperature of the different regions in which the solar system is placed at different times, is altogether arbitrary; and, if pushed to the amount to which it must be carried, in order to account for the phenomenon, is highly improbable[7]. The doctrine of central heat,

[7] For this hypothesis would make it necessary to suppose that the earth has, at some former period, derived from some other star or stars more heat than she now derives from the sun. But this would imply, as highly probable, that at some period some other star or stars must have produced also a *mechanical*

on the other hand, (which need not be conceived as implying the *universal* fluidity of the mass,) is not only naturally suggested by the subterraneous increase of temperatures, but explains the spheroidal figure of the earth; and falls in with almost any theory which can be devised, of volcanoes, earthquakes, and great geological changes.

Sect. 5.—*Problems respecting Elevations and Crystalline Forces.*

OTHER problems respecting the forces by which great masses of the earth's crust have been displaced, have also been solved by various mathematicians. It has been maintained by Von Buch that there occur, in various places, *craters of elevation;* that is, mountain-masses resembling the craters of volcanoes, but really produced by an expansive force from below, bursting an aperture through horizontal strata, and elevating them in a conical form. Against this doctrine, as exemplified in the most noted instances, strong arguments have been adduced by other geologists. Yet the protrusion of fused rock by subterraneous forces upon a large scale is not denied: and how far the examples of such operations may, in any cases, be termed craters of elevation, must be considered as a question not yet decided. On the sup-

effect upon the solar system, greater than the effect of the sun. Now such a past operation of forces, fitted to obliterate all order and symmetry, is quite inconsistent with the simple, regular, and symmetrical relation which the whole solar system, as far as Uranus, bears to the present central body.

position of the truth of Von Buch's doctrine, M. de Beaumont has calculated the relations of position, the fissures, &c., which would arise. And Mr. Hopkins[8], of Cambridge, has investigated in a much more general manner, upon mechanical principles, the laws of the elevations, fissures, faults, veins, and other phenomena which would result from an elevatory force, acting simultaneously at every point beneath extensive portions of the crust of the earth. An application of mathematical reasoning to the illustration of the phenomena of veins had before been made in Germany by Schmidt and Zimmerman[9]. But the conclusions which Mr. Hopkins has obtained, respecting the two sets of fissures, at right angles to each other, which would in general be produced by such forces as he supposes, offer an interest and instruction altogether new, to be derived from their comparison with the geological phenomena of various districts.

Other forces, still more obscure in their nature and laws, have played a very important part in the formation of the earth's crust. I speak of the forces by which the crystalline, slaty, and jointed structure of mineral masses has been produced. These forces are probably identical, on the one hand, with the cohesive forces from which rocks derive their solidity and their physical properties; while, on the other hand, they are closely connected with the

[8] Trans. Camb. Phil. Soc. vol. vi. 1836.

[9] Phil. Mag. July, 1836, p. 2.

forces of chemical attraction. No attempts, of any lucid and hopeful kind, have yet been made to bring such forces under definite mechanical conceptions: and perhaps mineralogy, to which science, as the point of junction of chemistry and crystallography, such attempts would belong, is hardly yet ripe for such speculations. But when we look at the universal prevalence of crystalline forms and cleavages, at the extent of the phenomena of slaty cleavage, and at the *segregation* of special minerals into veins and nodules, which has taken place in some unknown manner, we cannot doubt that the forces of which we now speak have acted very widely and energetically. Any elucidation of their nature would be an important step in geological dynamics.

Sect. 6.—Theories of Changes of Climate.

As we have already stated, geology offers to us strong evidence that the climate of the ancient periods of the earth's history was hotter than that which now exists in the same countries. This, and other circumstances, have led geologists to the investigation of the effects of any hypothetical causes of such changes of condition in respect of heat.

The love of the contemplation of geometrical symmetry, as well as other reasons, suggested the hypothesis that the earth's axis had originally no obliquity, but was perpendicular to the equator. Such a construction of the world had been thought of

before the time of Milton[10], as what might be supposed to have existed when man was expelled from Paradise; and Burnet, in his *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, (1690,) adopted this notion of the paradisiacal condition of the globe:

> The spring
> Perpetual smiled on earth with verdant flowers,
> Equal in days and nights.

In modern times, too, some persons have been disposed to adopt this hypothesis, because they have conceived that the present polar distribution of light is inconsistent with the production of the fossil plants which are found in those regions[11], even if we could, in some other way, account for the change of temperature. But this alteration in the axis of revolution could not take place without a subversion of the equilibrium of the surface, such as does not appear to have occurred; and the change has of late been generally declared impossible by physical astronomers.

The effects of other astronomical changes have been calculated by Sir John Herschel. He has examined, for instance, the thermotical consequences of the diminution of the eccentricity of the earth's orbit, which has been going on for ages beyond the records of history. He finds[12] that, on this account,

[10] Some say he bade his angels turn askance
The poles of earth twice ten degrees and more
From the sun's axle, &c.—*Paradise Lost*, x. 214.

[11] Lyell, i. 155. Lindley, Fossil Flora.

[12] Geol. Tr. vol. iii. p. 295.

the annual effect of solar radiation would increase as we go back to remoter periods of the past; but (probably at least) not in a degree sufficient to account for the apparent past changes of climate. He finds, however, that, though the effect of this change on the mean temperature of the year may be small, the effect on the extreme temperature of the seasons will be much more considerable; "so as to produce alternately, in the same latitude of either hemisphere, a perpetual spring, or the extreme vicissitudes of a burning summer and a rigorous winter[13]."

Mr. Lyell has traced the consequences of another hypothesis on this subject, which appears at first sight to promise no very striking results, but which yet is found, upon examination, to involve adequate causes of very great changes: I refer to the supposed various distribution of land and water at different periods of the earth's history. If the land were all gathered into the neighbourhood of the poles, it would become the seat of constant ice and snow, and would thus very greatly reduce the temperature of the whole surface of the globe. If, on the other hand, the polar regions were principally water, while the tropics were occupied with a belt of land, there would be no part of the earth's surface on which the frost could fasten a firm hold, while the torrid zone would act like a furnace to heat the whole. And, supposing a cycle of terrestrial changes in which these conditions should succeed each other,

[13] Geol. Tr. vol. iii. p. 298.

the winter and summer of this "great year," might differ much more than the elevated temperature which we are led to ascribe to former periods of the globe, can be judged to have differed from the present state of things.

The ingenuity and plausibility of this theory cannot be doubted: and perhaps its results may hereafter be found not quite out of the reach of calculation. Some progress has already been made in calculating the movement of heat into, through, and out of the earth; but when we add to this the effects of the currents of the ocean and the atmosphere, the problem, thus involving so many thermotical and atmological laws, operating under complex conditions, is undoubtedly one of extreme difficulty. Still, it is something, in this as in all cases, to have the problem even stated; and none of the elements of the solution appears to be of such a nature, that we need allow ourselves to yield to despair, respecting the possibility of dealing with it in a useful manner, as our knowledge becomes more complete and definite.

CHAPTER VI.

Progress of the Geological Dynamics of Organized Beings.

Sect. 1.—*Objects of this Science.*

Perhaps in extending the term *Geological Dynamics* to the causes of changes in organized beings, I shall be thought to be employing a forced and inconvenient phraseology. But it will be found that, in order to treat geology in a truly scientific manner, we must bring together all the classes of speculations concerning known causes of change; and the Organic Dynamics of Geology, or of Geography, if the reader prefers the word, appears not an inappropriate phrase for one part of this body of researches.

As has already been said, the species of plants and animals which are found imbedded in the strata of the earth, are not only different from those which now live in the same regions, but, for the most part, different from any now existing on the face of the earth. The remains which we discover imply a past state of things different from that which now prevails; they imply also that the whole organic creation has been renewed, and that this renewal has taken place several times. Such extraordinary general facts have naturally put in activity very bold speculations.

But, as has already been said, we cannot speculate upon such facts in the past history of the globe, without taking a large survey of its present condition. Does the present animal and vegetable population differ from the past, in the same way in which the products of one region of the existing earth differ from those of another? Can the creation and diffusion of the fossil species be explained in the same manner as the creation and diffusion of the creatures among which we live? And these questions lead us onwards another step, to ask,—What *are* the laws by which the plants and animals of different parts of the earth differ? What was the manner in which they were originally diffused?—Thus we have to include, as portions of our subject, the *Geography of Plants*, and of *Animals*, and the *history of their change and diffusion;* intending by the latter subject, of course, *palætiological* history,—the examination of the causes of what has occurred, and the inference of past events, from what we know of causes.

It is unnecessary for me to give at any length a statement of the problems which are included in these branches of science, or of the progress which has been made in them; since Mr. Lyell, in his work on Geology, has treated these subjects in a very able manner, and in the same point of view in which I am thus led to consider them. I will only briefly refer to some points, availing myself of his labours and his ideas.

Sect. 2.—*Geography of Plants and Animals.*

With regard both to plants and animals, it appears[1], that besides such differences in the products of different regions as we may naturally suppose to be occasioned by climate and other external causes; an examination of the whole organic population of the globe leads us to consider the earth as divided into *provinces*, each province being occupied by its own group of species, and these groups not being mixed or interfused among each other to any great extent. And thus, as the earth is occupied by various nations of men, each appearing, at first sight, to be of a different stock, so each other tribe of living things is scattered over the ground in a similar manner, and distributed into its separate *nations* in distant countries. The places where species are thus peculiarly found, are, in the case of plants, called their *stations*. Yet each species in its own region loves and selects some peculiar conditions of shade or exposure, soil or moisture: its place defined by the general description of such conditions, is called its *habitation*.

Not only each species thus placed in its own province, has its position further fixed by its own habits, but more general groups and assemblages are found to be determined in their situation by more general conditions. Thus[2] it is the character of the *flora* of a collection of islands, scattered through a wide ocean in a tropical and humid climate, to contain an im-

[1] Lyell, B. iii. c. v.

[2] Ib. i. 198.

mense preponderance of tree-ferns. In the same way, the situation and depth at which certain genera of shells are found, have been tabulated[3] by Mr. Broderip. Such general inferences, if they can be securely made, are of extreme interest in their bearing on geological speculations.

The means by which plants and animals are now diffused from one place to another, have been well described by Mr. Lyell[4]. And he has considered also, with due attention, the manner in which they become imbedded in mineral deposits of various kinds[5]. He has thus followed the history of organized bodies, from the germ to the tomb, and thence to the cabinet of the geologist.

But, besides the fortunes of individual plants and animals, there is another class of questions, of great interest, but of great difficulty;—the fortunes of each species. In what manner do species which were not, begin to be? as geology teaches us that they many times have done; and, as even our own reasonings convince us they must have done, at least in the case of the species among which we live.

We here obviously place before us, as a subject of research, the creation of living things;—a subject shrouded in mystery, and not to be approached without reverence. But though we may conceive, that, on this subject, we are not to seek our belief from science alone, we shall find, it is asserted, within the limits of allowable and unavoidable speculation, many

[3] Greenough, Add. 1835, p. 20.

[4] Lyell, B. iii. c. v. vi. vii. [5] B. iii. c. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi.

curious and important problems which may well employ our physiological skill. For example, we may ask:—how we are to recognise the species which were originally created distinct?—whether the population of the earth at one geological epoch could pass to the form which it has at a succeeding period, by the agency of natural causes alone?—and if not, what other account we can give of the succession which we find to have taken place?

The most remarkable point in the attempts to answer these and the like questions, is the controversy between the advocates and the opponents of the doctrine of the *transmutation of species*. This question is, even from its mere physiological import, one of great interest; and the interest is much enhanced by our geological researches, which again bring the question before us in a striking form, and on a gigantic scale. We shall, therefore, briefly state the point at issue.

Sect. 3.—*Question of the Transmutation of Species.*

We see that animals and plants may, by the influence of breeding, and of external agents operating upon their constitution, be greatly modified, so as to give rise to varieties and races different from what before existed. How different, for instance, is one kind and breed of dog from another! The question, then, is, whether organized beings can, by the mere working of natural causes, pass from the type of one species to that of another? whether the wolf may, by

domestication, become the dog? whether the ourang-outang may, by the power of external circumstances, be brought within the circle of the human species? And the dilemma in which we are placed is this;—that if species are not thus interchangeable, we must suppose the fluctuations of which each species is capable, and which are apparently indefinite, to be bounded by rigorous limits; whereas, if we allow such a *transmutation of species*, we abandon that belief in the adaptation of the structure of every creature to its destined mode of being, which not only most persons would give up with repugnance, but which, as we have seen, has constantly and irresistibly impressed itself on the minds of the best naturalists, as the true view of the order of the world.

But the study of geology opens to us the spectacle of many groups of species which have, in the course of the earth's history, succeeded each other at vast intervals of time; one set of animals and plants disappearing, as it would seem, from the face of our planet, and others, which did not before exist, becoming the only occupants of the globe. And the dilemma then presents itself to us anew:—either we must accept the doctrine of the transmutation of species, and must suppose that the organized species of one geological epoch were transmuted into those of another by some long-continued agency of natural causes; or else, we must believe in many successive acts of creation and extinction of species, out of the common course of nature; acts which, therefore, we may properly call miraculous.

This latter dilemma, however, is a question concerning the facts which have happened in the history of the world; the deliberation respecting it belongs to physical geology itself, and not to that subsidiary science which we are now describing, and which is concerned only with such causes as we know to be in constant and orderly action.

The former question, of the limited or unlimited extent of the modifications of animals and plants, has received full and careful consideration from eminent physiologists: and in their opinions we find, I think, an indisputable preponderance to that decision which rejects the transmutation of species, and which accepts the former side of the dilemma; namely, that the changes of which each species is susceptible, though difficult to define in words, are limited in fact. It is extremely interesting and satisfactory thus to receive an answer in which we can confide, to inquiries seemingly so wide and bold as those which this subject involves. I refer to Mr. Lyell, Dr. Prichard, Mr. Lawrence, and others, for the history of the discussion, and for the grounds of the decision; and I shall quote very briefly the main points and conclusions to which the inquiry has led[6].

It may be considered, then, as determined by the over-balance of physiological authority, that there is a capacity in all species to accommodate themselves, to a certain extent, to a change of external circumstances; this extent varying greatly according

[6] Lyell, B. iii. c. iv.

to the species. There may thus arise changes of appearance or structure, and some of these changes are transmissible to the offspring: but the mutations thus superinduced are governed by constant laws, and confined within certain limits. Indefinite divergence from the original type is not possible; and the extreme limit of possible variation may usually be reached in a short period of time: in short, *species have a real existence in nature*, and a transmutation from one to another does not exist.

Thus, for example, Cuvier remarks, that notwithstanding all the differences of size, appearance, and habits, which we find in the dogs of various races and countries, and though we have (in the Egyptian mummies) skeletons of this animal as it existed three thousand years ago, the relation of the bones to each other remains essentially the same; and, with all the varieties of their shape[7] and size, there are characters which resist all the influences both of external nature, of human intercourse, and of time.

Sect. 4.—*Hypothesis of Progressive Tendencies.*

WITHIN certain limits, however, as we have said, external circumstances produce changes in the forms of organized beings. The causes of change, and the laws and limits of their effects, as they obtain in the existing state of the organic creation, are in the highest degree interesting. And, as has

[7] Ossem. Foss. Disc. Prél. p. 61.

been already intimated, the knowledge thus obtained, has been applied with a view to explain the origin of the existing population of the world, and the succession of its past conditions. But those who have attempted such an explanation, have found it necessary to assume certain additional laws, in order to enable themselves to deduce, from the tenet of the transmutability of the species of organized beings, such a state of things as we see about us, and such a succession of states as is evidenced by geological researches. And here, again, we are brought to questions of which we must seek the answers from the most profound physiologists. Now referring, as before, to those which appear to be the best authorities, it is found that these additional positive laws are still more inadmissible than the primary assumption of indefinite capacity of change. For example, in order to account, on this hypothesis, for the seeming adaptation of the endowments of animals to their wants, it is held that the endowments are the result of the wants;—that the swiftness of the antelope, the claws and teeth of the lion, the trunk of the elephant, the long neck of the giraffe, have been produced by a certain plastic character in the constitution of animals, operated upon, for a long course of ages, by the attempts which these animals made to attain objects which their previous organization did not place within their reach. In this way, it is maintained that the most striking attributes of animals, those which apparently imply most clearly

the providing skill of their Creator, have been brought forth by the long-repeated efforts of the creatures to attain the object of their desires; thus animals with the highest endowments have been gradually developed from ancestral forms of the most limited organization: thus fish, birds, and beasts, have grown from *small gelatinous bodies*, "petits corps gelatineux," possessing some obscure principle of life, and the capacity of developement; and thus man himself, with all his intellectual and moral, as well as physical privileges, has been derived from some creature of the ape or baboon tribe, urged by a constant tendency to improve, or at least to alter his condition.

As we have said, in order to arrive, even hypothetically, at this result, it is necessary to assume, besides a mere capacity for change, other positive and active principles, some of which we may notice. Thus, we must have, as the direct productions of nature on this hypothesis, certain monads or rough draughts, the primary *rudiments* of plants and animals. We must have, in these, a constant *tendency to progressive improvement*, to the attainment of higher powers and faculties than they possess; which tendency is again perpetually modified and controlled by the *force of external circumstances*. And in order to account for the simultaneous existence of animals in every stage of this imaginary progress, we must suppose that nature is compelled to be *constantly* producing those elementary beings, from which all animals are successively developed.

I need not stay to point out how extremely arbi-

trary every part of this scheme is; and how complex its machinery would be, even if it did account for the facts. It may be sufficient to observe, as others have done[8], that the capacity of change, and of being influenced by external circumstances, such as we really find it in nature, and therefore such as in science we must represent it, is a tendency, not to improve, but to deteriorate. When species are modified by external causes, they usually degenerate, and do not advance. And there is no instance of a species acquiring an entirely new sense, faculty, or organ, in addition to, or in the place of, what it had before.

Not only, then, is the doctrine of the transmutation of species in itself disproved by the best physiological reasonings, but the additional assumptions which are requisite, to enable its advocates to apply it to the explanation of the geological and other phenomena of the earth, are altogether gratuitous and fantastical.

Such is the judgment to which we are led by the examination of the discussions which have taken place on this subject. Yet in certain speculations, occasioned by the discovery of the *Sivatherium*, a new fossil animal from the Sub-Himalaya mountains of India, M. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire speaks of the belief in the immutability of species as a conviction which is fading away from men's minds. He speaks too of the termination of the age of Cuvier, "la clôture

[8] Lyell, B. iii. c. i. p. 413.

du siècle de Cuvier," and of the commencement of a better zoological philosophy[9]. But though he expresses himself with great animation, I do not perceive that he adduces, in support of his peculiar opinions, any arguments in addition to those which he urged during the lifetime of Cuvier. And the reader[10] may recollect that the consideration of that controversy led us to very different anticipations from his, respecting the probable future progress of physiology. The discovery of the Sivatherium supplies no particle of proof to the hypothesis, that the existing species of animals are descended from extinct creatures which are specifically distinct: and we cannot act more wisely than in listening to the advice of that eminent naturalist, M. de Blainville[11]. "Against this hypothesis, which, up to the present time, I regard as purely gratuitous, and likely to turn geologists out of the sound and excellent road in which they now are, I willingly raise my voice, with the most absolute conviction of being in the right."

Sect. 5.—*Question of Creation as related to Science.*

But since we reject the production of new species by means of external influence, do we then, it may be asked, accept the other side of the dilemma which we have stated; and admit a series of crea-

[9] Compte Rendu de l'Acad. des Sc. 1837, No. 3, p. 81.

[10] See p. 464 of this volume.

[11] Compte Rendu, 1837, No. 5, p. 168.

tions of species, by some power beyond that which we trace in the ordinary course of nature?

To this question, the history and analogy of science, I conceive, teach us to reply as follows:—All palætiological sciences, all speculations which attempt to ascend from the present to the remote past, by the chain of causation, do also, by an inevitable consequence, urge us to look for the beginning of the state of things which we thus contemplate; but in none of these cases have men been able, by the aid of science, to arrive at a beginning which is homogeneous with the known course of events. The first origin of language, of civilization, of law and government, cannot be clearly made out by reasoning and research; and just as little, we may expect, will a knowledge of the origin of the existing and extinct species of plants and animals, be the result of physiological and geological investigation.

But, though philosophers have never yet demonstrated, and perhaps never will be able to demonstrate, what was that primitive state of things in the social and material worlds, from which the progressive state took its first departure; they can still, in all the lines of research to which we have referred, go very far back;—determine many of the remote circumstances of the past sequence of events;—ascend to a point which, from our position at least, seems to be near the origin;—and exclude many suppositions respecting the origin itself. Whether, by the light of reason alone, men will ever be able to do more than this, it is difficult to say. It is, I think,

no irrational opinion, even on grounds of philosophical analogy alone, that in all those sciences which look back and seek a beginning of things, we may be unable to arrive at a consistent and definite belief, without having recourse to other grounds of truth, as well as to historical research and scientific reasoning. When our thoughts would apprehend steadily the creation of things, we find that we are obliged to summon up other ideas than those which regulate the pursuit of scientific truths;—to call in other powers than those to which we refer natural events: it cannot, then, be considered as very surprising, if, in this part of our inquiry, we are compelled to look for other than the ordinary evidence of science.

Geology, forming one of the palætiological class of sciences, which trace back the history of the earth and its inhabitants on philosophical grounds, is thus associated with a number of other kinds of research, which are concerned about language, law, art, and consequently about the internal faculties of man, his thoughts, his social habits, his conception of right, his love of beauty. Geology being thus brought into the atmosphere of moral and mental speculations, it may be expected that her investigations of the probable past will share an influence common to them; and that she will not be allowed to point to an origin of her own, a merely physical beginning of things; but that, as she approaches towards such a a goal, she will be led to see that it is the origin of many trains of events, the point of convergence of

many lines. It may be, that instead of being allowed to travel up to this focus of being, we are only able to estimate its place and nature, and to form of it such a judgment as this;—that it is not only the source of mere vegetable and animal life, but also of rational and social life, language and arts, law and order; in short, of all the progressive tendencies by which the highest principles of the intellectual and moral world have been and are developed, as well as of the succession of organic forms, which we find scattered, dead or living, over the earth.

This reflection concerning the natural scientific view of creation, it will be observed, has not been sought for, from a wish to arrive at such conclusions; but it has flowed spontaneously from the manner in which we have had to introduce geology into our classification of the sciences: and this classification was framed from an unbiassed consideration of the general analogies and guiding ideas of the various portions of our knowledge. Such remarks as we have made may on this account be considered more worthy of attention.

But such a train of thought must be pursued with caution. Although it may not be possible to arrive at a right conviction respecting the origin of the world, without having recourse to other than physical considerations, and to other than geological evidence; yet extraneous considerations, and extraneous evidence, respecting the nature of the beginning of things, must never be allowed to influence our physics or our geology. Our geological dynamics,

like our astronomical dynamics, may be inadequate to carry us back to an origin of that state of things, of which it explains the progress: but this deficiency must be supplied, not by adding supernatural to natural geological dynamics, but by accepting, in their proper place, the views supplied by a portion of knowledge of a different character and order. If we include in theology the speculations to which we have recourse for this purpose, we must exclude them from geology. The two sciences may conspire, not by having any part in common; but because, though widely diverse in their lines, both point to a mysterious and invisible origin of the world.

All that which claims our assent on those higher grounds of which theology takes cognizance, must claim such assent as is consistent with those grounds; that is, it must require belief in respect of all that bears upon the highest relations of our being, those on which depend our duties and our hopes. Doctrines of this kind may and must be conveyed and maintained, by means of information concerning the past history of man, and his social and material, as well as moral and spiritual fortunes. He who believes that a Providence has ruled the affairs of mankind, will also believe that a Providence has governed the material world. But any language in which the narrative of this government of the material world can be conveyed, must necessarily be very imperfect and inappropriate; being expressed in terms of those ideas which have been selected by men, in order to describe the appearances and rela-

tions of created things as they affect one another. In all cases, therefore, where we have to attempt to interpret such a narrative, we must feel that we are extremely liable to err; and most of all, when our interpretation refers to those material objects and operations which are most foreign to the main purpose of a history of providence. If we have to consider a communication containing a view of such a government of the world, imparted to us, as we may suppose, in order to point out the right direction for our feelings of trust, and reverence, and hope, towards the Governor of the world, we may expect that we shall be in no danger of collecting from our authority erroneous notions with regard to the power, and wisdom, and goodness of His government; or with respect to our own place, duties, and prospects, and the history of our race, so far as our duties and prospects are concerned. But that we should rightly understand the detail of all events in the history of man, or of the skies, or of the earth, which are narrated for the purpose of thus giving a right direction to our minds, is by no means equally certain; and I do not think it would be too much to say, that an immunity from perplexity and error, in such matters, is, on general grounds, very improbable. It cannot then surprise us to find, that parts of such narrations which seem to refer to occurrences like those of which astronomers and geologists have attempted to determine the laws, have given rise to many interpretations, all inconsistent with one another, and most of

them at variance with the best established principles of astronomy and geology.

It may be urged, that all truths must be consistent with all other truths, and that therefore the results of true geology or astronomy cannot be irreconcileable with the statements of true theology. And this universal consistency of truth with itself must be assented to; but it by no means follows that we must be able to obtain a full insight into the nature and manner of such a consistency. Such an insight would only be possible if we could obtain a clear view of that central body of truth, the source of the principles which appear in the separate lines of speculation. To expect that we should see clearly how the providential government of the world is consistent with the unvarying laws by which its motions and developements are regulated, is to expect to understand thoroughly the laws of motion, of developement, and of providence; it is to expect that we may ascend from geology and astronomy to the creative and legislative centre, from which proceeded earth and stars; and then descend again into the moral and spiritual world, because its source and centre are the same as those of the material creation. It is to say that reason, whether finite or infinite, must be consistent with itself; and that, therefore, the finite must be able to comprehend the infinite, to travel from any one province of the moral and material universe to any other, to trace their bearing, and to connect their boundaries.

One of the advantages of the study of the history

and nature of science in which we are now engaged is, that it warns us of the hopeless and presumptuous character of such attempts to understand the government of the world by the aid of science, without throwing any discredit upon the reality of our knowledge;—that while it shows how solid and certain each science is, so long as it refers its own facts to its own ideas, it confines each science within its own limits, and condemns it as empty and helpless, when it pronounces upon those subjects which are extraneous to it. The error of persons who should seek a geological narrative in theological records, would be rather in the search itself than in their interpretation of what they might find; and in like manner the error of those who would conclude against a supernatural beginning, or a providential direction of the world, upon geological or physiological reasonings, would be, that they had expected those sciences alone to place the origin or the government of the world in its proper light.

Though these observations apply generally to all the palætiological sciences, they may be permitted here, because they have an especial bearing upon some of the difficulties which have embarrassed the progress of geological speculation; and though such difficulties are, I trust, nearly gone by, it is important for us to see them in their true bearing.

From what has been said, it follows that geology and astronomy are, of themselves, incapable of giving us any distinct and satisfactory account of the origin of the universe, or of its parts. We

need not wonder, then, at any particular instance of this incapacity; as for example, that of which we have been speaking, the impossibility of accounting by any natural means for the production of all the successive tribes of plants and animals which have peopled the world in the various stages of its progress, as geology teaches us. That they were, like our own animal and vegetable contemporaries, profoundly adapted to the condition in which they were placed, we have ample reason to believe; but when we inquire whence they came into this our world, geology is silent. The mystery of creation is not within the range of her legitimate territory; she says nothing, but she points upwards.

Sect. 6.—The hypothesis of the regular Creation and Extinction of Species.

1. *Creation of Species.*—We have already seen how untenable, as a physiological doctrine, is the principle of the transmutability and progressive tendency of species; and therefore, when we come to apply to theoretical geology the principles of the present chapter, this portion of the subject will easily be disposed of. I hardly know whether I can state that there is any other principle which has been applied to the solution of the geological problem, and which, therefore, as a general truth, ought to be considered here. Mr. Lyell, indeed, has spoken[12] of an hypothesis that "the successive creation of species may constitute a regular part of the economy of

[12] B. III. c. xi. p. 168.

nature:" but he has nowhere, I think, so described this process as to make it appear in what department of science we are to place the hypothesis. Are these new species created by the production, at long intervals, of an offspring different in species from the parents? Or are the species so created produced without parents? Are they gradually evolved from some embryo substance? or do they suddenly start from the ground, as in the creation of the poet?

> . . . . . Perfect forms
> Limbed and full-grown: out of the ground up rose
> As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons
> In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den; ...
> The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared
> The tawny lion, pawing to get free
> His hinder parts; then springs as broke from bounds,
> And rampant shakes his brinded mane; &c. &c.
>
> *Paradise Lost*, B. vii.

Some selection of one of these forms of the hypothesis, rather than the others, with evidence for the selection, is requisite to entitle us to place it among the known causes of change which in this chapter we are considering. The bare conviction that a creation of species has taken place, whether once or many times, so long as it is unconnected with our organical sciences, is a tenet of natural theology rather than of physical philosophy.

2. *Extinction of Species.*—With regard to the extinction of species, Mr. Lyell has propounded a doctrine which is deserving of great attention here. Brocchi, when he had satisfied himself, by examina-

tion of the Sub-Apennines, that about half the species which had lived at the period of their deposition, had since become extinct, suggested as a possible cause for this occurrence, that the vital energies of a species, like that of an individual, might gradually decay in the progress of time and of generations, till at last the prolific power might fail, and the species wither away. Such a property would be conceivable as a physiological fact; for we see something of the kind in fruit-trees propagated by cuttings: after some time, the stock appears to wear out, and loses its peculiar qualities. But we have no sufficient evidence that this is the case in generations of creatures continued by the reproductive powers. Mr. Lyell conceives, that, without admitting any inherent constitutional tendency to deteriorate, the misfortunes to which plants and animals are exposed by the change of the physical circumstances of the earth, by the alteration of land and water, and by the changes of climate, must very frequently occasion the loss of several species. We have historical evidence of the extinction of one conspicuous species, the dodo, a bird of large size and singular form, which inhabited the Isle of France when it was first discovered, and which now no longer exists. Several other species of animals and plants seem to be in the course of vanishing from the face of the earth, even under our own observation. And taking into account the greater changes of the surface of the globe which geology compels us to assume, we may imagine

many or all the existing species of living things to be extirpated. If, for instance, that reduction of the climate of the earth which appears, from geological evidence, to have taken place already, be supposed to go on much further, the advancing snow and cold of the polar regions may destroy the greater part of our plants and animals, and drive the remainder, or those of them which possess the requisite faculties of migration and accommodation, to seek an asylum near the equator. And if we suppose the temperature of the earth to be still further reduced, this zone of now-existing life, having no further place of refuge, will perish, and the whole earth will be tenanted, if at all, by a new creation. Other causes might produce the same effect as a change of climate; and, without supposing such causes to affect the whole globe, it is easy to imagine circumstances such as might entirely disturb the equilibrium which the powers of diffusion of different species have produced;—might give to some the opportunity of invading and conquering the domain of others;—and in the end, the means of entirely suppressing them, and establishing themselves in their place.

That this extirpation of certain species, which, as we have seen, happens in a few cases under common circumstances, might happen upon a greater scale, if the range of external changes were to be much enlarged, cannot be doubted. The extent, therefore, to which natural causes may account for the extinction of species, will depend upon the amount of

change which we suppose in the physical conditions of the earth. It must be a task of extreme difficulty to estimate the effect upon the organic world, even if the physical circumstances were given. To determine the physical condition to which a given state of the earth would give rise, I have already noted as another very difficult problem. Yet these two problems must be solved, in order to enable us to judge of the sufficiency of any hypothesis of the extinction of species; and in the mean time, for the mode in which new species come into the places of those which are extinguished, we have (as we have seen,) no hypothesis which physiology can, for a moment, sanction.

Sect. 7.—The Imbedding of Organic Remains.

THERE is still one portion of the Dynamics of Geology, a branch of great and manifest importance, which I have to notice, but upon which I need only speak very briefly. The mode in which the spoils of existing plants and animals are imbedded in the deposits now forming, is a subject which has naturally attracted the attention of geologists. During the controversy which took place in Italy respecting the fossils of the Sub-Apennine hills, Vitaliano Donati[14], in 1750, undertook an examination of the Adriatic, and found that deposits containing shells and corals, extremely resembling the strata of the hills, were there in the act of formation. But without dwelling on other observations of like kind, I

[14] Lyell, B. i. c. iii. p. 67.

may state that Mr. Lyell has treated this subject, and all the topics connected with it, in a very full and satisfactory manner. He has explained[15], by an excellent collection of illustrative facts, how deposits of various substance and contents are formed; how plants and animals become fossil in peat, in blown sand, in volcanic matter, in alluvial soil, in caves, and in the beds of lakes and seas. This exposition is of the most instructive character, as a means of obtaining right conclusions concerning the causes of geological phenomena. Indeed, in many cases, the similarity of past effects with operations now going on, is so complete, that they may be considered as identical; and the discussion of such cases belongs, at the same time, to Geological Dynamics and to Physical Geology; just as the problem of the fall of meteorolites may be considered as belonging alike to mechanics and to physical astronomy. The growth of modern peat-mosses, for example, fully explains the formation of the most ancient; objects are buried in the same manner in the ejections of active and of extinct volcanoes; within the limits of history, many estuaries have been filled up; and in the deposits which have occupied these places, are strata containing shells[16], as in the older formations.

[15] B. iii. c. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi. xvii.

[16] Lyell, B. iii. c. xvii, p. 286. See also his Address to the Geological Society in 1837, for an account of the Researches of Mr. Stokes and of Professor Göppert, on the lapidification of vegetables.

PHYSICAL GEOLOGY.

CHAPTER VII.

PROGRESS OF PHYSICAL GEOLOGY.

Sect. 1.—*Object and Distinctions of Physical Geology.*

BEING, in consequence of the steps which we have attempted to describe, in possession of two sciences, one of which traces the laws of action of known causes, and the other describes the phenomena which the earth's surface presents, we are now prepared to examine how far the attempts to refer the facts to their causes have been successful: we are ready to enter upon the consideration of Theoretical or *Physical* Geology, as, by analogy with astronomy, we may term this branch of speculation.

The distinction of this from other portions of our knowledge is sufficiently evident. In former times, geology was always associated with mineralogy, and sometimes confounded with it; but the mistake of such an arrangement must be clear, from what has been said. Geology is connected with mineralogy, only so far as the latter science classifies a large portion of the objects which geology employs as evidence of its statements. To confound the two is the same error as it would be to treat philosophical history as

identical with the knowledge of medals. Geology procures evidence of her conclusions wherever she can; from minerals or from seas; from inorganic or from organic bodies; from the ground or from the skies. The geologist's business is to learn the past history of the earth; and he is no more limited to one or a few kinds of documents, as his sources of information, than the historian of man, in the execution of a similar task.

Physical Geology, of which I now speak, may not be always easily separable from Descriptive Geology: in fact, they have generally been combined, for few have been content to describe, without attempting in some measure to explain. Indeed, if they had done so, it is probable that their labours would have been far less zealous, and their expositions far less impressive. We by no means regret, therefore, the mixture of these two kinds of knowledge, which has so often occurred; but still, it is our business to separate them. The works of astronomers, before the rise of sound physical astronomy, were full of theories, but these were advantageous, not prejudicial, to the progress of the science.

Geological theories have been abundant and various; but yet our history of them must be brief. For our object is, as must be borne in mind, to exhibit these, only so far as they are steps discoverably tending to the *true* theory of the earth: and in most of them we do not trace this character. Or rather, the portions of the labours of geologists which do merit this praise, belong to the two preceding divi-

sions of the subject, and have been treated of there.

The history of Physical Geology, considered as the advance towards a science as real and stable as those which we have already treated of (and this is the form in which we ought to trace it), hitherto consists of few steps. We hardly know whether the progress is begun. The history of Physical Astronomy almost commences with Newton, and few persons will venture to assert that the Newton of Geology has yet appeared.

Still, some examination of the attempts which have been made is requisite, in order to explain and justify the view which the analogy of scientific history leads us to take, of the state of the subject. Though far from intending to give even a sketch of past geological speculations, I must notice some of the forms they have at different times assumed.

Sect. 2.—Of Fanciful Geological Opinions.

REAL and permanent geological knowledge, like all other physical knowledge, can be obtained only by inductions of classification and law from many clearly seen phenomena. The labour of the most active, the talent of the most intelligent, are requisite for such a purpose. But far less than this is sufficient to put in busy operation the inventive and capricious fancy. A few appearances hastily seen, and arbitrarily interpreted, are enough to give rise to a wondrous tale of the past, full of strange events and supernatural

agencies. The mythology and early poetry of nations afford sufficient evidence of man's love of the wonderful, and of his inventive powers, in early stages of intellectual developement. The scientific faculty, on the other hand, and especially that part of it which is requisite for the induction of laws from facts, emerges slowly and with difficulty from the crowd of adverse influences, even under the most favourable circumstances. We have seen that in the ancient world, the Greeks alone showed themselves to possess this talent; and what they thus attained to, amounted only to a few sound doctrines in astronomy, and one or two extremely imperfect truths in mechanics, optics, and music, which their successors were unable to retain. No other nation, till we come to the dawn of a better day in modern Europe, made any positive step at all in sound physical speculation. Empty dreams or useless exhibitions of ingenuity, formed the whole of their essays at such knowledge.

It must, therefore, independently of positive evidence, be considered as extremely improbable, that any of these nations should, at an early period, have arrived, by observation and induction, at wide general truths, such as the philosophers of modern times have only satisfied themselves of by long and patient labour and thought. If resemblances should be discovered between the assertions of ancient writers and the discoveries of modern science, the probability in all cases, the certainty in most, is, that these are accidental coincidences;—that the ancient opinion is

no anticipation of the modern discovery, but is one guess among many, not a whit the more valuable because its expression agrees with a truth. The author of the guess could not intend the truth, because his mind was not prepared to comprehend it. Those of the ancients who spoke of the harmony which binds all things together, could not mean the Newtonian gravitation, because they had never been led to conceive an attractive force, governed by definite mathematical laws in its quantity and operation.

In agreement with these views, we must, I conceive, estimate the opinions which we find among the ancients, respecting the changes which the earth's surface has undergone. These opinions, when they are at all of a general kind, are arbitrary fictions of the fancy, showing man's love of generality indeed, but indulging it without that expense of labour and thought which alone can render it legitimate.

We might, therefore, pass by all the traditions and speculations of Oriental, Egyptian, and Greek cosmogony, as extraneous to our subject. But since these have recently been spoken of, as conclusions collected, however vaguely, from observed facts[1], we may make a remark or two upon them.

The notion of a series of creations and destructions of worlds, which appears in the sacred volume of the Hindoos, which formed part of the traditionary lore of Egypt, and which was afterwards adopted into the poetry and philosophy of Greece, must be considered

[1] Lyell, B. i. c. ii. p. 8.

as a mythological, not a physical, doctrine. When this doctrine was dwelt upon, men's thoughts were directed, not to the terrestrial facts which it seemed to explain, but to the attributes of the deities which it illustrated. The conception of a Supreme power, impelling and guiding the progress of events, which is permanent among all perpetual change, and regular among all seeming chance, was readily entertained by contemplative and enthusiastic minds; and when natural phenomena were referred to this doctrine, it was rather for the purpose of fastening its impressiveness upon the senses, than in the way of giving to it authority and support. Hence we perceive that in the exposition of this doctrine, an attempt was always made, to fill and elevate the mind with the notions of marvellous events, and of infinite times, in which vast cycles of order recurred. The "great year," in which all celestial phenomena come round, offered itself as capable of being calculated; and a similar great year was readily assumed for terrestrial and human events. Hence there were to be brought round by great cycles, not only deluges and conflagrations which were to destroy and renovate the earth, but also the series of historical occurrences. Not only the sea and land were to recommence their alternations, but there was to be another Argo, which should carry warriors on the first sea-foray[a], and another succession of heroic wars. Looking at the passages of ancient authors which refer to terrestrial changes in this view, we shall see that they

[a] Virg. Eclog. 4.

are addressed almost entirely to the love of the marvellous and the infinite, and cannot with propriety be taken as indications of a spirit of physical philosophy. For example, if we turn to the celebrated passage in Ovid[3], where Pythagoras is represented as asserting that land becomes sea, and sea land, and many other changes which geologists have verified, we find that these observations are associated with many fables, as being matter of exactly the same kind;—the fountain of Ammon which was cold by day and warm by night[4];—the waters of Salmacis which effeminate men;—the Clitorian spring which makes them loathe wine;—the Simplegades islands which were once moveable;—the Tritonian lake which covered men's bodies with feathers;—and many similar marvels. And the general purport of the whole is, to countenance the doctrine of the metempsychosis, and the Pythagorean injunction of not eating animal food. It is clear, I think, that facts so introduced must be considered as having been contemplated rather in the spirit of poetry than of science.

We must estimate in the same manner, the very remarkable passage brought to light by M. Elie de Beaumont[5], from the Arabian writer, Kazwiri; in which we have a representation of the same spot of ground, as being, at successive intervals of five hundred years, a city, a sea, a desert, and again a city. This invention is adduced, I conceive, rather to

[3] Met. Lib. xv. [4] V. 309, &c.

[5] Ann. des Sc. Nat. xxv. 380.

feed the appetite of wonder, than to fix it upon any reality: as the title of his book, "The Marvels of Nature," obviously intimates.

The speculations of Aristotle, concerning the exchanges of land and sea which take place in long periods, are not formed in exactly the same spirit, but they are hardly more substantial; and seem to be quite as arbitrary, since they are not confirmed by any examples and proofs. After stating[6] that the same spots of the earth are not always land and always water, he gives the reason. "The principle and cause of this is," he says, "that the inner parts of the earth, like the bodies of plants and animals, have their ages of vigour and of decline; but in plants and animals all the parts are in vigour, and all grow old, at once: in the earth different parts arrive at muturity at different times by the operation of cold and heat: they grow and decay on account of the sun and the revolution of the stars, and thus the parts of the earth acquire different power, so that for a certain time they remain moist, and then become dry and old: and then other places are revivified, and become partially watery." We are, I conceive, doing no injustice to such speculations by classing them among *fanciful* geological opinions.

We must also, I conceive, range in the same division another class of writers of much more modern times;—I mean those who have framed their geology by interpretations of Scripture. I have already endeavoured to show that such an attempt is a per-

[6] Meteorol. i. 14.

version of the purpose of a divine communication, and cannot lead to any physical truth. I do not here speak of geological speculations in which the Mosaic account of the deluge has been referred to; for whatever errors may have been committed on that subject, it would be as absurd to disregard the most ancient historical record, in attempting to trace back the history of the earth, as it would be gratuitously to reject any other source of information. But the interpretations of the account of the creation have gone further beyond the limits of sound philosophy: and when we look at the arbitrary and fantastical inventions by which a few phrases of the writings of Moses have been moulded into complete systems, we cannot doubt that these interpretations belong to the present Section.

I shall not attempt to criticize, nor even to enumerate, these Scriptural geologies,—"Sacred Theories of the Earth," as Burnet termed his. Ray Woodward, Whiston, and many other persons to whom science has considerable obligations, were involved, by the speculative habits of their times, in these essays; and they have been resumed by persons of considerable talent and some knowledge, on various occasions up to the present day; but the more geology has been studied on its own proper evidence, the more have geologists seen the unprofitable character of such labours.

I proceed now to the next step in the progress of theoretical geology.

Sect. 3.—Of Premature Geological Theories.

WHILE we were giving our account of Descriptive Geology, the attentive reader would perceive that we did, in fact, state several steps in the advance towards general knowledge; but when, in those cases, the theoretical aspect of such discoveries softened into an appearance of mere classification, the occurrence was assigned to the history of descriptive rather than of theoretical geology. Of such a kind was the establishment, by a long and vehement controversy, of the fact, that the impressions in rocks are really the traces of ancient living things; such, again, were the division of rocks into primitive, secondary, tertiary; the ascertainment of the orderly succession of organic remains; the consequent fixation of a standard series of formations and strata; the establishment of the igneous nature of trap rocks; and the like. These are geological truths which are assumed and implied in the very language which geology uses; thus showing how in this, as in all other sciences, the succeeding steps involve the preceding. But in the history of geological theory, we have to consider the wider attempts to combine the facts, and to assign them to their causes.

The close of the last century produced two antagonist theories of this kind, which long maintained a fierce and doubtful struggle;—that of Werner and that of Hutton: the one termed Neptunian, from its ascribing the phenomena of the earth's surface

mainly to aqueous agency; the other Plutonian or Vulcanian, because it employed the force of subterraneous fire as its principal machinery. The circumstance which is most worthy of notice in these remarkable essays is, the endeavour to give, by means of such materials as the authors possessed, a complete and simple account of all the facts of the earth's history. The Saxon professor, proceeding on the examination of a small district in Germany, maintained the existence of a chaotic fluid, from which a series of universal formations had been precipitated, the position of the strata being broken up by the falling in of subterraneous cavities, in the intervals between these depositions. The Scotch philosopher, who had observed in England and Scotland, thought himself justified in declaring that the existing causes were sufficient to spread new strata on the bottom of the ocean, and that there they are consolidated, elevated, and fractured by volcanic heat, so as to give rise to new continents.

It will hardly be now denied that all that is done in each of these systems must be proved by the examination of many cases, and limited by many conditions and circumstances. Theories so wide and simple, were consistent only with a comparatively scanty collection of facts, and belong to the early stage of geological knowledge. In the progress of the science, the "theory" of each part of the earth must come out of the examination of that part, combined with all that is well established concerning all the rest; and a general theory must

result from the comparison of all such partial theoretical views. Any attempt to snatch it before its time must fail; and therefore we may venture at present to designate general theories, like those of Hutton and Werner, as *premature*.

This, indeed, is the sentiment of most of the good geologists of the present day. The time for such general systems, and for the fierce wars to which the opposition of such generalities gives rise, is probably now past for ever; and geology will not again witness such a controversy as that of the Wernerian and Huttonian schools.

> . . . . . As when two black clouds
> With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
> Over the Caspian: then stand front to front,
> Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
> To join their dark encounter in mid-air,
> So frowned the mighty combatants, that hell
> Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood:
> For never but once more was either like
> To meet so great a foe.

The main points really affecting the progress of sound theoretical geology, will find a place in one of the two next Sections.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Two Antagonist Doctrines of Geology.

Sect. 1.—*Of the Doctrine of Geological Catastrophes.*

That great changes, of a kind and intensity quite different from the common course of events, and which may therefore properly be called *catastrophes*, have taken place upon the earth's surface, was an opinion which appeared to be forced upon men by obvious facts. Rejecting, as a mere play of fancy, the notions of the destruction of the earth by cataclysms or conflagrations, of which we have already spoken, we find that the first really scientific examination of the materials of the earth, that of the Sub-Apennine hills, led men to draw this inference. Leonardo da Vinci, whom we have already noticed for his early and strenuous assertion of the real marine origin of fossil impressions of shells, also maintained that the bottom of the sea had become the top of the mountain; yet his mode of explaining this may perhaps be claimed by the modern advocates of uniform causes, as more allied to their opinion, than to the doctrine of catastrophes[1]. But

[1] "Here is a part of the earth which has become more light, and which rises, while the opposite part approaches nearer to the centre, and what was the bottom of the sea is become the top of the mountain."—*Venturi's Léonard da Vinci.*

Steno, in 1669, approached nearer to this doctrine: for he asserted that Tuscany must have changed its face at intervals, so as to acquire six different configurations, by the successive breaking down of the older strata into inclined positions, and the horizontal deposit of new ones upon them. Strabo, indeed, at an earlier period had recourse to earthquakes, to explain the occurrence of shells in mountains; and Hooke published the same opinion later. But the Italian geologists prosecuted their researches under the advantage of having, close at hand, large collections of conspicuous and consistent phenomena. Lazzaro Moro, in 1740, attempted to apply the theory of earthquakes to the Italian strata; but both he and his expositor, Cirillo Generelli, inclined rather to reduce the violence of these operations within the ordinary course of nature[2], and thus leant to the doctrine of uniformity, of which we have afterwards to speak. Moro was encouraged in this line of speculation by the extraordinary occurrence, as it was deemed by most persons, of the rise of a new volcanic island from a deep part of the Mediterranean, near Santorino, in 1707[3]. But in other countries, as the geological facts were studied, the doctrine of catastrophes appeared to gain ground. Thus in England, where, through a large part of the country, the coal-measures are extremely inclined and contorted, and covered over by more horizontal fragmentary beds, the opinion that

[2] Lyell, i. 3. p. 64.

[3] Ib. p. 60.

some violent catastrophe had occurred to dislocate them, before the superincumbent strata were deposited, was strongly held. It was conceived that a period of violent and destructive action must have succeeded to one of repose; and that, for a time, some unusual and paroxysmal forces must have been employed in elevating and breaking the pre-existing strata, and wearing their fragments into smooth pebbles, before nature subsided into a new age of tranquillity and vitality. In like manner Cuvier, from the alternations of fresh-water and salt-water species in the strata of Paris, collected the opinion of a series of great revolutions, in which "the thread of induction was broken." Deluc and others, to whom we owe the first steps in geological dynamics, attempted carefully to distinguish between causes now in action, and those which have ceased to act; in which latter class they reckoned the causes which have elevated the existing continents. This distinction was assented to by many succeeding geologists. The forces which have raised into the clouds the vast chains of the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Andes, must have been, it was deemed, something very different from any agencies now operating.

This opinion was further confirmed by the appearance of a complete change in the forms of animal and vegetable life, in passing from one formation to another. The species of which the remains occurred, were entirely different, it was said, in two successive epochs: a new creation appears

to have intervened; and it was readily believed that a transition, so entirely out of the common course of the world, might be accompanied by paroxysms of mechanical energy. Such views prevail extensively among geologists up to the present time: for instance, in the comprehensive theoretical generalisations of Elie de Beaumont and others, respecting mountain-chains, it is supposed that, at certain vast intervals, systems of mountains, which may be recognised by the parallelism of course of their inclined beds, have been disturbed and elevated, lifting up with them the aqueous strata which had been deposited among them in the intervening periods of tranquillity, and which are recognised and identified by means of their organic remains: and according to the adherents of this hypothesis, these sudden elevations of mountain-chains have been followed, again and again, by mighty waves, desolating whole regions of the earth.

The peculiar bearing of such opinions upon the progress of physical geology will be better understood by attending to the *doctrine of uniformity*, which is opposed to them, and with the consideration of which we shall close our survey of this science, the last branch of our present task.

Sect. 2.—*Of the Doctrine of Geological Uniformity.*

THE opinion that the history of the earth had involved a series of catastrophes, confirmed by the two great classes of facts, the symptoms of mechanical

violence on a very large scale, and of complete changes in the living things by which the earth had been tenanted, took strong hold of the geologists of England, France, and Germany. Hutton, though he denied that there was evidence of a beginning of the present state of things, and referred many processes in the formation of strata to existing causes, did not assert that the elevatory forces which raise continents from the bottom of the ocean, were of the same order, as well as of the same kind, with the volcanoes and earthquakes which now shake the surface. His doctrine of uniformity was founded rather on the supposed analogy of other lines of speculation, than on the examination of the amount of changes now going on. "The Author of nature," it was said, "has not permitted in His works any symptom of infancy or of old age, or any sign by which we may estimate either their future or their past duration:" and the example of the planetary system was referred to in illustration of this[5]. And the persuasion that the champions of this theory were not disposed to accept the usual opinions on the subject of creation, was allowed, perhaps very unjustly, to weigh strongly against them in the public opinion.

While the rest of Europe had a decided bias towards the doctrine of geological catastrophes, the phenomena of Italy, which, as we have seen, had already tended to soften the rigour of that doctrine, in the progress of speculation from Steno to Generelli, were destined to mitigate it still more, by converting

[5] Lyell, i. 4, p. 94.

to the belief of uniformity transalpine geologists who had been bred up in the catastrophist creed. This effect was, indeed, gradual. For a time the distinction of the *recent* and the *tertiary* period was held to be marked and strong. Brocchi asserted that a large portion of the Sub-Apennine fossil shells belonged to living species of the Mediterranean Sea: but the geologists of the rest of Europe turned an incredulous ear to this Italian tenet; and the persuasion of the distinction of the tertiary and the recent period was deeply impressed on most geologists by the memorable labours of Cuvier and Brongniart on the Paris basin. Still, as other tertiary deposits were examined, it was found that they could by no means be considered as contemporaneous, but that they formed a chain of posts, advancing nearer and nearer to the recent period. Above the strata of the basins of London and Paris[6], lie the newer strata of Touraine, of Bourdeaux, of the valley of the Bormida and the Superga near Turin, and of the basin of Vienna, explored by M. Constant Prevost. Newer and higher still than these, are found the Sub-Apennine formations of Northern Italy, and probably of the same period, the English "crag" of Norfolk and Suffolk. And most of these marine formations are associated with volcanic products and fresh-water deposits, so as to imply apparently a long train of alternations of corresponding processes. It may easily be supposed that, when the subject had assumed this

[6] Lyell, 1st ed. vol. iii. p. 61.

form, the boundary of the present and past condition of the earth was in some measure obscured. But it was not long before a very able attempt was made to obliterate it altogether. In 1828, Mr. Lyell set out on a geological tour through France and Italy[7]. He had already conceived the idea of classing the tertiary groups by reference to the number of recent species which were found in a fossil state. But as he passed from the north to the south of Italy, he found, by communication with the best fossil conchologists, Borelli at Turin, Guidotti at Parma, Costa at Naples, that the number of extinct species decreased; so that the last-mentioned naturalist, from an examination of the fossil shells of Otranto and Calabria, and of the neighbouring seas, was of opinion that few of the tertiary shells were of extinct species. To complete the series of proof, Mr. Lyell himself explored the strata of Ischia, and found, 2000 feet above the level of the sea, shells, which were all pronounced to be of species now inhabiting the Mediterranean; and soon after, he made collections of a similar description on the flanks of Etna, in the Val di Noto, and in other places.

The impression produced by these researches is described by himself[8]. "In the course of my tour I had been frequently led to reflect on the precept of Descartes, that a philosopher should once in his life doubt every thing he had been taught; but I still retained so much faith in my early geological creed as to feel the most lively surprise on visiting Sortino, Pentalica, Syracuse, and other parts of the

[7] 1st ed. vol. iii. Pref.

[8] Lyell, 1st ed. Pref. x.

Val di Noto, at beholding a limestone of enormous thickness, filled with recent shells, or sometimes with mere casts of shells, resting on marl in which shells of Mediterranean species were imbedded in a high state of preservation. All idea of attaching a high antiquity to a regularly-stratified limestone, in which the casts and impressions of shells alone were visible, vanished at once from my mind. At the same time, I was struck with the identity of the associated igneous rocks of the Val di Noto with well-known varieties of 'trap' in Scotland and other parts of Europe; varieties which I had also seen entering largely into the structure of Etna.

"I occasionally amused myself," Mr. Lyell adds, "with speculating on the different rate of progress which geology might have made, had it been first cultivated with success at Catania, where the phenomena above alluded to, and the great elevation of the modern tertiary beds in the Val di Noto, and the changes produced in the historical era by the Calabrian earthquakes, would have been familiarly known."

Before Mr. Lyell entered upon his journey, he had put in the hands of the printer the first volume of his "Principles of Geology, being an attempt to explain the former Changes of the Earth's Surface *by reference to Causes now in Operation*." And after viewing such phenomena as we have spoken of, he, no doubt, judged that the doctrine of catastrophes of a kind entirely different from the existing course of events, would never have been generally received,

if geologists had formed their opinions upon the Sicilian strata. The boundary separating the present from the anterior state of things crumbled away; the difference of fossil and recent species had disappeared, and, at the same time, the changes of position which marine strata had undergone, although not inferior to those of earlier geological periods, might be ascribed, it was thought, to the same kind of earthquakes as those which still agitate that region. Both the supposed proofs of catastrophic transition, the organical and the mechanical changes, failed at the same time; the one by the removal of the fact, the other by the exhibition of the cause. The powers of earthquakes, even such as they now exist, were, it was supposed, if allowed to operate for an illimitable time, adequate to produce all the mechanical effects which the strata of all ages display. And it was declared that all evidence of a beginning of the present state of the earth, or of any material alteration in the energy of the forces by which it has been modified at various epochs, was entirely wanting.

Other circumstances in the progress of geology tended the same way. Thus, in cases where there had appeared in one country a sudden and violent transition from one stratum to the next, it was found, that by tracing the formations into other countries, the chasm between them was filled up by intermediate strata; so that the passage became as gradual and gentle as any other step in the series. For example, though the conglomerates, which in

some parts of England overlie the coal-measures, appear to have been produced by a complete discontinuity in the series of changes; yet in the coal-fields of Yorkshire, Durham, and Cumberland, the transition is smoothed down in such a way that the two formations pass into each other. A similar passage is observed in Central Germany, and in Thuringia is so complete, that the coal-measures have sometimes been considered as subordinate to the *todtliegendes*[9].

Upon such evidence and such arguments, the doctrine of catastrophes was rejected with some contempt and ridicule; and it was maintained, that the operation of the causes of geological change may properly and philosophically be held to have been uniform through all ages and periods. On this opinion, and the grounds on which it has been urged, we shall make a few concluding remarks.

It must be granted at once, to the advocates of this geological uniformity, that we are not arbitrarily to assume the existence of catastrophes. The degree of uniformity and continuity with which terremotive forces have acted, must be collected, not from any gratuitous hypothesis, but from the facts of the case. We must suppose the causes which have produced geological phenomena, to have been as similar to existing causes, and as dissimilar, as the effects teach us. We are to avoid all bias in favour of powers deviating in kind and degree from those which act at present; a bias, which Mr. Lyell asserts, has extensively prevailed among geologists.

[9] De la Beche, p. 414, Manual.

But when Mr. Lyell goes further, and considers it a merit in a course of geological speculation that it *rejects* any difference between the intensity of existing and of past causes, we conceive that he errs no less than those whom he censures. "An *earnest and patient endeavour to reconcile* the former indications of change[10]," with *any* restricted class of causes,—a habit which he enjoins,—is not, we may suggest, the temper in which science ought to be pursued. The effects must themselves teach us the nature and intensity of the causes which have operated; and we are in danger of error, if we seek for slow and shun violent agencies further than the facts naturally direct us, no less than if we were parsimonious of time and prodigal of violence. *Time*, inexhaustible and ever accumulating his efficacy, can undoubtedly do much for the theorist in geology; but *Force*, whose limits we cannot measure, and whose nature we cannot fathom, is also a power never to be slighted: and to call in the one to protect us from the other, is equally presumptuous, to whichever of the two our superstition leans. To invoke Time, with ten thousand earthquakes, to overturn and set on edge a mountain-chain, should the phenomena indicate the change to have been sudden and not successive, would be ill excused by pleading the obligation of first appealing to known causes.

In truth, we know causes only by their effects; and in order to learn the nature of the causes which modify the earth, we must study them through all ages of their action, and not select arbitrarily the

[10] Lyell, B. iv. c. i. p. 328.

period in which we live as the standard for all other epochs. The forces which have produced the Alps and the Andes are known to us by experience, no less than the forces which have raised Etna to its present height; for we learn their amount in both cases by their results. Why, then, do we make a merit of using the latter case as a measure for the former? Or how can we know the true scale of such force, except by comprehending in our view all the facts which we can bring together?

In reality, when we speak of the uniformity of nature, are we not obliged to use the term in a very large sense, in order to make the doctrine at all tenable? It includes catastrophes and convulsions of a very extensive and intense kind; what is the limit to the violence which we must allow to these changes? In order to enable ourselves to represent geological causes as operating with uniform energy through all time, we must measure our time by long cycles, in which repose and violence alternate; how long may we extend this cycle of change, the repetition of which we express by the word uniformity?

And why must we suppose that all our experience, geological as well as historical, includes more than *one* such cycle? Why must we insist upon it, that man has been long enough an observer to obtain the *average* of forces which are changing through immeasurable time?

The analogy of other sciences has been referred to, as sanctioning this attempt to refer the whole train of facts to known causes. To have done this, it has

been said, is the glory of astronomy: she seeks no hidden virtues, but explains all by the force of gravitation, which we witness operating at every moment. But let us ask, whether it would really have been a merit in the founders of physical astronomy, to assume that the celestial revolutions resulted from any selected class of known causes? When Newton first attempted to explain the motions of the moon by the force of gravity, and failed because the measures to which he referred were erroneous, would it have been philosophical in him, to insist that the difference which he found ought to be overlooked, since otherwise we should be compelled to go to causes other than those which we usually witness in action? Or was there any praise due to those who assumed the celestial forces to be the same with gravity, rather than to those who assimilated them with any other known force, as magnetism, till the calculation of the laws and amount of these forces, from the celestial phenomena, had clearly sanctioned such an identification? We are not to select a conclusion now well proved, to persuade ourselves that it would have been wise to assume it anterior to proof, and to attempt to philosophize in the method thus recommended.

Again, the analogy of astronomy has been referred to, as confirming the assumption of perpetual uniformity. The analysis of the heavenly motions, it has been said, supplies no trace of a beginning, no promise of an end. But here, also, this analogy is erroneously applied. Astronomy, as the science

of cyclical motions, has nothing in common with geology. But look at astronomy when she has an analogy with geology; consider our knowledge of the heavens as a palætiological science;—as the study of a past condition, from which the present is derived by causes acting in time. Is there then no evidence of a beginning, or of a progress? What is the import of the nebular hypothesis? A luminous matter is condensing, solid bodies are forming, are arranging themselves into systems of cyclical motion; in short, we have exactly what we are told, on this analogy, we ought not to have;—the beginning of a world. To justify this argument, I will not maintain the truth of the nebular hypothesis; but if geologists wish to borrow maxims of philosophizing from astronomy, such speculations as have led to that hypothesis must be their model.

Or, let them look at any of the other provinces of palætiological speculation; at the history of states, of civilization, of languages. We may assume some *resemblance* or connexion between the principles which determined the progress of government, or of society, or of literature, in the earliest ages, and those which now operate, but who has speculated successfully, assuming an *identity* of such causes? Where do we now find a language in the process of formation, unfolding itself in inflexions, terminations, changes of vowels by grammatical relations, such as characterize the oldest known languages? Where do we see a nation, by its natural faculties, inventing writing, or the arts of life, as we find them

in the most ancient civilized nations? We may assume hypothetically, that man's faculties develop themselves in these ways; but we see no such effects produced by these faculties, in our own time, and now in progress, without the influence of foreigners.

Is it not clear, in all these cases, that history does not exhibit a series of cycles, the aggregate of which may be represented as a uniform state, without indication of origin or termination? Does it not rather seem evident that, in reality, the whole course of the world, from the earliest to the present times, is but *one* cycle, yet unfinished;—offering, indeed, no clear evidence of the mode of its beginning; but still less entitling us to consider it as a repetition or series of repetitions of what had gone before?

Thus we find, in the analogy of the sciences, no confirmation of the doctrine of uniformity, as it has been maintained in geology. Yet we discern, in this analogy, no ground for resigning our hope, that future researches, both in geology and in other palætiological sciences, may throw much additional light on the question of the uniform or catastrophic progress of things, and on the earliest history of the earth and of man. But when we see how wide and complex is the range of speculation to which our analogy has referred us, we may well be disposed to pause in our review of science;—to survey from our present position the ground that we have passed over;—and thus to collect, so far as we may, guidance and encouragement to enable us to advance in the track which lies before us.

Before we quit the subject now under consideration, we may, however, observe, that what the analogy of science really teaches us, as the most promising means of promoting this science, is the strenuous cultivation of the two subordinate sciences, geological knowledge of facts, and geological dynamics. These are the two provinces of knowledge—corresponding to phenomenal astronomy, and mathematical mechanics —which may lead on to the epoch of the Newton of geology. We may, indeed, readily believe that we have much to do in both these departments. While so large a portion of the globe is geologically unexplored; while all the general views which are to extend our classifications satisfactorily from one hemisphere to another, from one zone to another, are still unformed; while the organic fossils of the tropics are almost unknown, and their general relation to the existing state of things has not even been conjectured; —how can we expect to speculate rightly and securely, respecting the history of the whole of our globe? And if geological classification and description are thus imperfect, the knowledge of geological causes is still more so. As we have seen, the necessity and the method of constructing a science of such causes, are only just beginning to be perceived. Here, then, is the point where the labours of geologists may be usefully applied; and not in premature attempts to decide the widest and abstrusest questions, which the human mind can propose to itself.

It has been stated[11], that when the Geological Society of London was formed, their professed ob-

[11] Lyell, B. i. c. iv. p. 103.

ject was to multiply and record observations, and patiently to await the result at some future time; and their favourite maxim was, it is added, that the time was not yet come for a general system of geology. This was a wise and philosophical temper, and a due appreciation of their position. And even now, their task is not yet finished; their mission is not yet accomplished. They have still much to do, in the way of collecting facts; and in entering upon the exact estimation of causes, they have only just thrown open the door of a vast labyrinth, which it may employ many generations to traverse, but which they must needs explore, before they can penetrate to the oracular chamber of Truth.

I REJOICE, on many accounts, to find myself arriving at the termination of the task which I have attempted. One reason why I am glad to close my history is, that in it I have been compelled, especially in the latter part of my labours, to speak as a judge respecting eminent philosophers whom I reverence as my teachers in those very sciences on which I have had to pronounce;—if, indeed, even the appellation of pupil be not too presumptuous. But I doubt not that such men are as full of candour and tolerance, as they are of knowledge and thought. And if they deem, as I did, that such a history of science ought to be attempted, they will know that it was not only the historian's privilege, but his duty, to estimate the import and amount of

the advances which he had to narrate; and if they judge, as I trust they will, that the attempt has been made with full integrity of intention and no want of labour, they will look upon the inevitable imperfections of the execution of my work with indulgence and hope.

There is another source of satisfaction in arriving at this point of my labours. If, after our long wandering through the region of physical science, we were left with minds unsatisfied and unraised, to ask, "Whether this be all?"—our employment might well be deemed weary and idle. If it appeared that all the vast labour and intense thought which has passed under our review had produced nothing but a barren knowledge of the external world, or a few arts ministering merely to our gratification; or if it seemed that the methods of arriving at truth, so successfully applied in these cases, aid us not when we come to the higher aims and prospects of our being;—this history might well be estimated as no less melancholy and unprofitable than those which narrate the wars of states and the wiles of statesmen. But such, I trust, is not the impression which our survey has tended to produce. At various points, the researches which we have followed out, have offered to lead us from matter to mind, from the external to the internal world; and it was not because the thread of investigation snapped in our hands, but rather because we were resolved to confine ourselves, for the present, to the material sciences, that we did not proceed onwards to subjects

of a closer interest. I trust, also, that it will appear, that the most perfect method of obtaining speculative truth,—that of which I have had to relate the result,—is by no means confined to the least worthy subjects; but that the methods of learning what is really true, though they must assume different aspects in cases where a mere contemplation of external objects is concerned, and where our own internal world of thought, feeling, and will, supplies the matter of our speculations, have yet a unity and harmony throughout all the possible employments of our minds. To be able to trace such connexions as this, is the proper sequel, and would be the high reward, of the labour which has been bestowed on the present work. And if a persuasion of the reality of such connexions, and a preparation for studying them, have been conveyed to the reader's mind while he has been accompanying me through our long survey, his time may not have been employed on these pages in vain. However vague and hesitating and obscure may be such a persuasion, it belongs, I doubt not, to the dawning of a better philosophy, which it may be my lot, perhaps, to develop more fully hereafter, if permitted by that Superior Power to whom all sound philosophy directs our thoughts.

THE END.

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